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HANSARD'S

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

THIRD SERIES:

COMMENCING WITH THE ACCESSION OF

WILLIAM IV.

---

51 VICTORIÆ, 1888.

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THE SECOND DAY OF MARCH, 1888,

TO

THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF MARCH, 1888.

Second Volume of the Session.

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ORDER OF THE DAY.

Public Meetings in the Metropolis — Resolution [Adjourned Debate]—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Motion [1st March]—

"That, having regard to the importance of preserving and protecting the right of open air public meetings for Her Majesty's subjects in the Metropolis, and with a view to prevent ill-will and disorder, it is desirable that an inquiry should be instituted by a Committee of this House into the conditions subject to which such meetings may be held, and the limits of the right of interference therewith by the Executive Government,"—(*Sir Charles Russell.*)

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[12.35.]

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ORDER OF THE DAY.

—o—

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE) — XIII. STANDING COMMITTEES—RESOLUTION [ADJOURNED DEBATE] [FOURTH NIGHT]—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [29th February],

"That the Resolutions of the House of the 1st December, 1882, relating to the Constitution and Proceedings of Standing Committees for the consideration of Bills relating to Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure, and to Trade, Shipping, and Manufactures, be revived.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—*continued.*

"Provided always, That the Committees shall consist of not more than Sixty nor less than Forty Members, subject to the power of addition to the said Committees by the Committee of Selection, as provided by the said Resolution,"—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

Main Question again proposed:—Debate *resumed* 384

Amendment proposed,

In line 4, after the word "revived," to insert the words,—"Provided, that 'Trade' shall include Agricultural and Fishing interests, and that those interests shall be entitled to due consideration in the constitution of such Standing Committee,"—(*Mr. Heneage*) 387

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted:"—After debate, Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment made, by inserting, in line 4, after the word "revived," by adding the words "and that Trade shall include Agriculture and Fishing."

Amendment proposed, in line 5, to leave out from the word "revived" to the end of the Question,—(*Viscount Lymington*) 399

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Question put, and *negatived;* words *struck out.*

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the Question as amended, to add the words—"That there be added another Standing Committee for the consideration of all Bills relating to Scotland only,"—(*Sir George Campbell*) 403

Question proposed, "That those words be there added:"—After debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 137, Noes 214; Majority 77.
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It being Midnight, the Debate on the Main Question, as amended, stood adjourned:—Debate to be resumed *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

Distress for Rent (Dublin) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Murphy, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Dwyer Gray, Mr. T. D. Sullivan, Captain M'Calmont, Mr. T. Harrington*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 159] 468

Steam Boilers Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Provand, Mr. Octavius V. Morgan, Mr. William Abraham*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 160] 468

Reformatory Schools Act (1866) Amendment Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Dugdale, Mr. Whitmore, Mr. Wharton, Mr. Curzon, Mr. Dixon, Mr. Mark Stewart*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 161] 468

[12.10.]

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE) — XIII. STANDING COMMITTEES—RESOLUTION [ADJOURNED DEBATE] [FIFTH NIGHT]—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Main Question, as amended,

"That the Resolutions of the House of the 1st December, 1882, relating to the Constitution and Proceedings of Standing Committees for the Consideration of Bills

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—*continued.*

relating to Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure, and to Trade, Shipping, and Manufactures, be revived, and that Trade shall include Agriculture and Fishing,"—(*Mr. W. H. Smith*)

Main Question, as amended, again proposed:—Debate *resumed* .. 468

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the Question, to add the words—"That there be another Grand Committee, similarly constituted, and subject to the same rules, the Members for Wales and Monmouthshire being Members of such Committee, for the consideration of all Bills relating to Wales which may, by order of the House, in each case, be committed to it,"—(*Mr. Rathbone*) 474

Question proposed, "That those words be there added:"—After debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 113, Noes 135; Majority 22.

Division List, Ayes and Noes 502

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the Question, to add the words—"That there be another Committee, similarly constituted, and subject to the same Rules, for the consideration of all questions of a Foreign or Colonial nature, and the ratification of Treaties with Foreign Powers,"—(*Mr. Cremer*) 510

Question proposed, "That those words be there added:"—After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 44, Noes 219; Majority 175.—(Div. List, No. 31.)

Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to.*

MOTIONS FOR BILLS AND NOMINATION OF SELECT COMMITTEES.

Moved, "That on Tuesdays and Fridays, and, if set down by the Government, on Mondays and Thursdays, Motions for leave to bring in Bills, and for the Nomination of Select Committees, may be set down for consideration at the commencement of Public Business. If such Motions be opposed, Mr. Speaker, after permitting, if he thinks fit, a brief explanatory statement from the Member who moves and from the Member who opposes any such Motion respectively, shall put the Question thereon without further Debate,"—(*Mr. W. H. Smith*) 514

Amendment proposed,

To leave out all the words after the word "That," and insert the words "Motions for leave to bring in Bills, and for the nomination of Standing and Select Committees, shall be exempted from the operation of the Resolution of 24th February 1888 (Sittings of the House),"—(*Mr. Buchanan*) 517

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "respectively," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "may without further Debate put the Question thereon, or the Question 'That the Debate be now adjourned,'"—(*Mr. W. H. Smith*) 522

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Question put, and *negatived.*

Words *added:*—Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to.*

Resolutions (30th April, 1869), read;

MORNING SITTINGS AT TWO O'CLOCK.

That, unless the House shall otherwise order, whenever the House shall meet at Two o'clock, the House will proceed with Private Business, Petitions, Motions for unopposed Returns, and leave of absence to Members, giving Notices of Motions, Questions to Ministers, and such Orders of the Day as shall have been appointed for the Morning Sitting.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING AT SEVEN O'CLOCK.

That on such days, if the business be not sooner disposed of, the House will suspend its sitting at Seven o'clock; and at Ten minutes before Seven o'clock, unless the House shall otherwise order, Mr. Speaker adjourns the Debate on any business then under discussion, or the Chairman shall report Progress, as the case may be, and no opposed business shall then be proceeded with.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—*continued.*

SITTING RESUMED AT NINE O'CLOCK.

That when such business has not been disposed of at Seven o'clock, unless the House shall otherwise order, Mr. Speaker (or the Chairman, in case the House shall be in Committee) do leave the Chair, and the House will resume its sitting at Nine o'clock, when the Orders of the Day not disposed of at the Morning Sitting, and any Motion which was under discussion at Ten minutes to Seven o'clock, shall be set down in the Order Book after the other Orders of the Day.

WHEN CHAIRMAN REPORTS PROGRESS AT NINE O'CLOCK.

That, whenever the House shall be in Committee at Seven o'clock, the Chairman do report Progress when the House resumes its sitting.

Resolved, That the said Resolutions be Standing Orders of the House.

ADJOURNMENT AT ONE O'CLOCK, A.M.

Resolved, That the House shall, unless previously adjourned, sit until One o'clock, a.m., when the Speaker shall adjourn the House without Question put, unless a Bill or Proceeding exempted from the operation of Standing Order "Sittings of the House" be then under consideration. That the Business under discussion, and any Orders of the Day not disposed of at One o'clock, a.m., do stand for the next day on which the House shall sit,—(*Mr. W. H. Smith.*)

Resolution of the 31st of May, 1875, read ;

WITHDRAWAL OF STRANGERS.

That, if at any sitting of the House, or in Committee, any Member shall take notice that Strangers are present, Mr. Speaker, or the Chairman (as the case may be), shall forthwith put the Question, "That Strangers be ordered to withdraw," without permitting any Debate or Amendment : Provided that the Speaker, or the Chairman, may, whenever he thinks fit, order the withdrawal of Strangers from any part of the House.

Resolved, That the said Resolution be a Standing Order of this House.

Resolution of the 12th of March, 1886, read ;

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS TO BE IN WRITING.

That Notices of Questions be given by Members in writing to the Clerk at the Table, without reading them vivâ voce in the House, unless the consent of the Speaker to any particular Question has been previously obtained.

Resolved, That the said Resolution be a Standing Order of this House.

Standing Order XIVA. (Closure of Debate) read, and amended by leaving out the first Proviso, lines 17 to 21 inclusive.

Standing Order XXI. (Notices on going into Committee of Supply) read 525

Moved, as an Amendment to Standing Order XXXI. (Notices on going into Committee of Supply), to leave out, in line 1, the word "first," and insert the word "an,"—(*Mr. W. H. Smith*) 526

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question :"—After short debate, Question put, and *negatived :*—Word *inserted.*

Standing Order, as amended, *agreed to.*

Standing Order XXII. (Select Committees) read, and amended by leaving out, in lines 1 and 2, the words "on Wednesdays and other Morning Sittings of the House."

Amendment proposed to Standing Order XXII. to leave out the words "except while the House is at prayers,"—(*Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the said Standing Order : " — After short debate, Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Standing Order XXXVI. (Orders of the Day and Notices of Motion) read, and amended by leaving out, in line 6, the word "Orders," and inserting the words "Business, whether Orders or Motions,"

Standing Order XXXVIII. (Orders of the Day and Notices of Motion) read, and amended by inserting, in line 3, after the word "Orders," the words "or Motions."

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—*continued.*

Resolved, That the Resolutions of this House of the 24th, 28th, and 29th days of February, and of the 7th day of March, relative to the Business of the House (Rules of Procedure), with the exception of Resolution No. XII., be Standing Orders of this House.

Moved, "That Standing Orders Nos. III., IV., V. (Wednesday Sittings), VI., VII., VIII. (Morning Sittings), XI. (Debates on Motions for Adjournment), XIII. (Irrelevance or Repetition), XIV. (Putting the Question), XXXIX. (Dropped Orders), XLI. (The Half-past 12 o'Clock Rule), and XLIV. (Divisions), be repealed,"—(*Mr. W. H. Smith*) 530

Amendment proposed, to leave out "XLI (The Half-past Twelve o'Clock Rule),"—(*Mr. Tomlinson*) 530

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

STANDING ORDERS.

Resolved, That the Standing Orders of this House relative to Public Business, as amended, be printed,—(*Mr. W. H. Smith*) 531

Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. W. H. Smith*:)—Question put, and *agreed to.*

Ordered, That the further consideration of the New Rules of Procedure be adjourned till *Monday* 19th March.

NATIONAL DEBT ACTS—RESOLUTION—

Committee to consider of amending the Acts relating to the National Debt (Queen's *Recommendation* signified), upon *Friday,* at Two of the clock,—(*Mr. W. H. Smith*) 532

RATING AND VALUATION (SCOTLAND)—

Select Committee *nominated:*—List of the Committee 533

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT—

Ordered, That a Committee of Six Members of this House be appointed to join with a Committee of the House of Lords to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament.

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords, to acquaint their Lordships, That this House hath appointed a Committee of Six Members to join with a Committee of the Lords to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament.

Ordered, That Mr. Childers, Viscount Lymington, Sir Algernon Borthwick, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, and Mr. Jackson be Members of the said Committee,—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

[5.40.]

LORDS, THURSDAY, MARCH 8.

ARMY—ROYAL BARRACKS, DUBLIN—INSANITARY CONDITION — Question, Earl Beauchamp; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for War (Lord Harris) 533

Liability of Trustees Bill (No. 24)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a,"—(*The Lord Herschell*) .. 534

After short debate, Motion *agreed to:*—Bill read 2^a accordingly.

Trust Companies Bill (No. 7)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a,"—(*The Lord Hobhouse*) .. 538

After short debate, Amendment *moved,* to leave out ("now,") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months,")—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

On Question, Whether ("now") shall stand part of the Motion? Their Lordships *divided;* Contents 31, Not-Contents 41; Majority 10.

Division List, Contents and Not-Contents 545

Resolved in the *negative:*—Bill to be read 2^a on *this day six months.*

POOR LAW RELIEF—MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS—

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty praying Her Majesty to issue a Royal Commission to inquire into the present systems of poor law relief, especially with reference to the apparent inadequacy of those systems to cope effectually with the distress recurring from time to time amongst large numbers of unemployed persons in the Metropolis and other populous places; or that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the subject,"—(*The Earl of Aberdeen*) .. 546

After debate, Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn*.

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT—

Message from the House of Commons that they have appointed a Committee, to consist of Six Members, to join with a Committee of their Lordships to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament; and to request that their Lordships will be pleased to appoint an equal number of Lords to be joined with the Members of that House: Ordered, that the said Message be taken into consideration *To-morrow*.

[7.15.]

COMMONS, THURSDAY, MARCH 8.

QUESTIONS.

—o—

CITY OF LONDON—CORN AND GRAIN DUTIES—Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) 559

ISLANDS OF THE PACIFIC—RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN TONGA—Question, Mr. W. H. James; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Baron Henry De Worms) 560

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—SUB-COMMISSIONERS AT ARMAGH—Question, Mr. Blane; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 560

COURT OF BANKRUPTCY (IRELAND)—THOMAS MORONEY, A PRISONER FOR CONTEMPT — Questions, Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth, Mr. H. Gardner, Mr. Dillon; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman).. 561

COAL MINES REGULATION ACT, 1872—EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS (NUMBERS)—Question, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 563

INLAND REVENUE—INCOME TAX ON REAL PROPERTY—Question, Sir Edward Birkbeck; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen).. 563

FINANCE—LOCAL LOANS STOCK—Questions, Mr. Henry H. Fowler; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen).. .. 564

CIVIL SERVICE (IRELAND)—PROMOTION OF WRITERS—Question, Mr. D. Sullivan; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) .. 565

EGYPT—RED SEA LIGHTS—Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) .. 565

ADMIRALTY—COASTGUARD STATION AT CARNE, CO. WEXFORD—Question, Mr. Harris; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) 566

MERCANTILE MARINE—COLLISIONS AT SEA—"BRITANNIC" AND "CELTIC"—Question, Mr. Channing; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) 566

INLAND REVENUE—GUN LICENCES FOR SHORT PERIODS—Question, Mr. J. W. Barclay; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) .. 567

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND)—TRAWLING—Questions, Mr. Anstruther, Mr. Esslemont; Answers, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) 568

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ROYAL COMMISSION ON CIVIL ESTABLISHMENTS—FIRST REPORT—Questions, Mr. Kimber, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) 571
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ALLOTMENTS ACT—TOWN COUNCIL OF TENTERDEN—Question, Mr. Cobb; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) 572
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IRELAND—THE LAW OFFICERS OF THE CROWN—THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND—Questions, Mr. A. E. Pease; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) .. 580
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London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance Bill—Legislation—Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, Mr. Tatton Egerton 584

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Norway—Tender for Coal Supply—Question, Mr. Fenwick; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 586

Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) Bill—Questions, Dr. Cameron, Mr. Hunter; Answers, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald); Question, Sir George Campbell [No reply] 586

Army Estimates, 1887—Field Artillery—Questions, Sir Henry Havelock-Allan, Lord Randolph Churchill, Captain Cotton; Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) 587

Post Office—Supply of Clothing to First-Class Postmen—Question, Mr. Caldwell; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) .. 589

Post Office—Deduction of Pay—Glasgow and Manchester—Question, Mr. Caldwell; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) .. 589

Morocco—Foreign Protection—Question, Sir John Simon; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson).. 590

Thames Conservancy Board—Composition—Question, Mr. Baumann; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) 590

Truck Amendment Act—Servants in Husbandry—Question, Mr. C. T. D. Acland; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) 591

Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887—Proclaimed Meeting at Youghal—Questions, Mr. Dillon; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) 591

The Emperor of Germany—Question, Mr. Hulse; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith).. 592

Civil Service (Ireland)—Action of an Official—Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) 592

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [5th March], "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair" (for Committee of Supply):—Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:" —Debate *resumed* 593

After long debate, Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question proposed 678

Moved, "That the Question be now put,"—(*Mr. W. H. Smith*:)—Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 250, Noes 75; Majority 175.—(Div. List, No. 32.)

Main Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 268, Noes 63; Majority 205.—(Div. List, No. 33.)

SUPPLY—*considered* in Committee—Army Estimates, 1888-9—

(In the Committee.)

(1.) 149,667, Land Forces.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 678

(2.) £4,977,000, Pay and Allowances.—Vote *agreed to* 682

Moved, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again:"—Question put, and *agreed to.*

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow*, at Two of the clock; Committee to sit again *To-morrow.*

[*March* 8.] Page

Trawling (Scotland) Bill [Bill 155]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time" 683

After short debate, it being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned:—Debate to be resumed *To-morrow*.

Occupiers' Disqualification Removal Bill [Bill 110]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time" 684

After short debate, Debate *adjourned* till *Monday* next.

MOTIONS.

GRANT OF SUPPLIES—MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE—

Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the procedure by which the House annually grants the Supplies to Her Majesty,"—(*Mr. Henry H. Fowler*) .. 685

Question put, and *agreed to*.

Coroners' Elections Bill—

Motion for Leave (*Mr. Wootton Isaacson*) 685

Debate *adjourned*.

Rating of Machinery Bill—

Motion for Leave (*Sir William Houldsworth*) 686

Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow*.

Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act (1886) Amendment (No. 2) Bill—*Ordered* (*Dr. Clark, Colonel Malcolm, Mr. Mackintosh, Dr. M'Donald, Mr. Angus Sutherland, Mr. Lyell*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 162] 686

[12.10.]

LORDS, FRIDAY, MARCH 9.

HITCHIN FREE SCHOOL—MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS—

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold her assent from a scheme of the Charity Commissioners laid before this House on 20th February relating to the Hitchin Free School,"—(*The Earl Beauchamp*) 686

After short debate, On Question? *Resolved* in the *negative*.

Lunacy Acts Amendment Bill (No. 22)—

House in Committee (according to Order) 691

Amendments made; the Report thereof to be received on *Tuesday* next.

VIVISECTION—MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS—

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for Correspondence between the Home Office and the Society for the Protection of Animals from Vivisection in reference to two recent instances of infringements of the law,"—(*The Viscount Sidmouth*) 692

After short debate, Motion *agreed to*.

Statute Law Revision Bill [H.L.]—*Presented* (*The Lord Chancellor*); read 1ª (No. 35) 694

SWEATING SYSTEM—

Select Committee *nominated*:—List of the Committee 694

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT—

Message of the House of Commons of Yesterday on the subject of the publication of Debates and Proceedings in Parliament, *considered* (according to Order).

Then it was *moved*, "That a Committee be appointed, to consist of Six Lords, to join with the Committee of the House of Commons as mentioned in the said Message, to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament,"—(*The Marquess of Salisbury.*)

The same was *agreed to.*

A message sent to the Commons in answer to their Message of Yesterday to inform them that this House has appointed a Committee to consist of Six Lords to join with the Committee of the Commons.

[6.15.]

COMMONS, FRIDAY, MARCH 9.

QUESTIONS.

PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—BALLYCOTTON PIER — Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) .. 695

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND)—MUSSEL BEDS IN TIDAL WATERS—Question, Mr. Anderson; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) 696

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—"MR. BALFOUR AND THE RESIDENT MAGISTRATES"—Questions, Mr. Mac Neill, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) 697

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (IRELAND) BILL — COUNCIL OF LAW REPORTING — Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, The Solicitor General for Ireland (Mr. Madden) 698

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—COURT OF THE RECORDER OF DUBLIN—Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, The Solicitor General for Ireland (Mr. Madden) 699

METROPOLITAN POLICE—PENSION TO POLICE CONSTABLE 285 L.—Questions, Mr. Gent-Davis; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 699

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES) — EASTER VOLUNTEER REVIEW AT ALDERSHOT —Question, Mr. Isaacs; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) 700

TECHNICAL SCHOOLS (SCOTLAND) ACT—MEMORANDUM OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—Questions, Mr. F. S. Powell; Answers, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) 701

SCOTLAND—DISTURBANCES IN LEWIS—TRIAL OF THE PRISONERS—Questions, Dr. Cameron; Answers, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) 701

ANNUAL FINANCE ACCOUNTS — PENSIONS FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND—Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) 702

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL (ENGLAND AND WALES) — THE METROPOLIS — Question, Mr. Baumann; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) 703

BURGH POLICE AND HEALTH (SCOTLAND) BILL — Question, Dr. Cameron; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) .. 703

LOTTERIES—THE GLADSTONE RADICAL CLUB—Question, Mr. Kelly; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 703

POST OFFICE—BRITISH AND FOREIGN POSTAGE RATES FROM SHANGHAI—Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) 704

THE NATIONAL DEBT—CONVERSION OF THE THREE PER CENTS—Question, Mr. Henry H. Fowler; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) 704

IRELAND—DESTITUTION IN THE ARRAN ISLANDS—Questions, Mr. J. E. Ellis, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour); Question, Dr. Cameron [No reply] .. 705

SALE OF LIQUORS ON SUNDAY (IRELAND) BILL—Question, Mr. T. W. Russell; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) 706

THE DEATH OF THE EMPEROR OF GERMANY—Observations, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), Sir William Harcourt .. 706

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

NATIONAL DEBT ACTS—*considered* in Committee—

(In the Committee.)

Moved, "That it is expedient to authorise the conversion of the New Three Per Cent. Annuities, the Consolidated Three Per Cent. Annuities, and the Reduced Three Per Cent. Annuities into certain other Annuities, and to provide for the redemption of the New Three Per Cent. Annuities,"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) .. 706

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Other Resolutions *agreed to.*

Resolutions to be reported upon *Monday* next.

East India (Purchase and Construction of Railways) Bill—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [5th March], "That the Bill be now read a second time:"—Question again proposed:—Debate *resumed* 738

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Thursday* next.

Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland [Salary, &c.]—

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Moved, "That it is expedient to authorize the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of a Salary to the Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland,"—(*Mr. William Henry Smith*) 738

After debate, *Moved*, "That the Question be now put,"—(*Mr. W. H. Smith*:)—Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 190, Noes 130; Majority 60.—(Div. List, No. 34.)

Question put,

"That it is expedient to authorize the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of a Salary to the Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland."

The House *divided;* Ayes 182, Noes 132; Majority 50.—(Div. List, No. 35.)

It being after ten minutes to Seven o'clock, the Chairman left the Chair to report Progress.

The House suspended its Sitting at Seven of the clock.

The House resumed its Sitting at Nine of the clock.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—Order for Committee read; Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—

HOUSE OF LORDS—RESOLUTION—

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words, "in the opinion of this House, it is contrary to the true principles of Representative Government, and injurious to their efficiency, that any person should be a Member of one House of the Legislature by right of birth, and it is therefore desirable to put an end to any such existing rights,"—(*Mr. Labouchere,*)—instead thereof 763

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 223, Noes 162; Majority 61.

Division List, Ayes and Noes 813

Main Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair:" —Motion, by leave, *withdrawn:*—Committee upon *Monday* next.

It being One of the clock, Mr. Speaker left the Chair without Question put.

LORDS, MONDAY, MARCH 12.

SCIENCE AND ART (METROPOLIS)—CHARTER FOR A TEACHING UNIVERSITY—Question, Lord Herschell; Answer, The Lord President of the Council (Viscount Cranbrook) 817

AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRESS—RESOLUTION—

Moved to resolve,

"That, in the opinion of this House, considering the depressed condition of agricultural and other industries in this country and the consequent distress among the working classes, it is incumbent upon Her Majesty's Government to take into their serious consideration what measures can be adopted to avert the grave consequences which must otherwise ensue,"—(*The Earl De La Warr*) 817

After debate, Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

METROPOLIS (STREET IMPROVEMENTS)—HYDE PARK CORNER—Question, Observations, Earl Fortescue, Lord Lamington, The Earl of Powis, Lord Magheramorne (Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works); Reply, Lord Henniker 832

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—STANDING ORDERS—RESOLUTION—

Moved, as a new Standing Order,

"That Private Bill Committees shall consist of three Members, and that all applications to Lords to serve upon them shall be addressed in writing to their residences," —(*The Lord Stratheden and Campbell*) 835

After short debate, Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

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Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (No. 2) Bill [H.L.]—*Presented* (*The Lord Wigan, Earl of Crawford*); read 1ª (No. 38) 841

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Resolutions [March 9] *reported* 882

After short debate, Resolutions *agreed to*:—Bill *ordered* (*Mr. Courtney, Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Jackson*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 164.]

Moved, "That the Bill be read a second time upon Friday, at Two of the clock:"—After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*.

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SUPPLY—Order for Committee read; Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—

ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM OF THE ADMIRALTY—RESOLUTION—

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "the allocation of authority in the administrative system of the Admiralty requires entire reform,"—(*Lord Charles Beresford*) 931

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After debate, Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question again proposed 977

After debate, Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question again proposed:—It being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned;—Debate to be resumed upon *Thursday.*

MOTIONS.

PRIVATE BILL LEGISLATION—

Moved, "That a Committee of Six Members of this House be appointed to join with a Committee of the House of Lords to examine into the present system of Private Bill Legislation, and to report how far, and in what manner, without prejudice to public interests, that system may be modified, with a view to the interests of suitors, the economy of the time of Parliament, and the reduction of costs and charges,"—(*Mr. William Henry Smith*) 1023

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Westminster Abbey Bill—

Motion for Leave (*Mr. William Henry Smith*) 1024

Question put, and *agreed to:*—Bill *ordered* (*Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Jackson*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 165.]

EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENTS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1882 (MADRAS COLLEGE)—

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold Her consent from the Scheme for the Management of the Endowment in the Burgh of St. Andrew's and County of Fife, known as the Madras College, now lying upon the Table of the House,"—(*Mr. Stephen Williamson*) 1025

After short debate, Question put, and *negatived.*

COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS—

Ordered, That the Committee of Public Accounts do consist of Twelve Members.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records,—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

County Courts (Ireland) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Clancy, Mr. Chance, Mr. Maurice Healy*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 166] 1029

Friendly Societies Act (1875) Amendment (No. 2) Bill—

Order for Second Reading upon *Wednesday*, 18th April, read, and *discharged*:—Bill *withdrawn.*

Ordered, That leave be given to bring in a Bill, instead thereof, to amend "The Friendly Societies Act, 1875," and that Mr. Francis Stevenson, Mr. Picton, Mr. Channing, Mr. Burt, Mr. Caldwell, and Mr. Mason do prepare and bring it in.

[12.30.]

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The Lord Privy Seal, (*E. Cadogan.*)
E. Spencer.
V. Oxenbridge.
L. Kintore. (*E. Kintore.*)
L. Sudeley.
L. Colville of Culross.

Ordered that such Committee have power to agree with the Committee of the Commons in the appointment of a Chairman.

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[7.30.]

COMMONS, TUESDAY, MARCH 13.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

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MOTION.

Government of India (Frontier Policy)—Resolution—

Moved, "That, in the opinion of this House, the unwise Frontier Policy of the Government of India is producing grave financial difficulties in that country, leading not only to increased burdens of taxation, but to the extension of the sale of intoxicating liquors for Revenue purposes, with serious results to the moral and material welfare of the people,"—(*Mr. Slagg*) 1093

After debate, *Moved,* "That the Question be now put,"—(*Mr. Caine:*)—Question put, and *agreed to.*

Question put,

"That, in the opinion of this House, the unwise Frontier Policy of the Government of India is producing grave financial difficulties in that country, leading not only to increased burdens of taxation, but to the extension of the sale of intoxicating liquors for Revenue purposes, with serious results to the moral and material welfare of the people,"—(*Mr. Slagg.*)

The House *divided;* Ayes 72, Noes 122; Majority 50.—(Div. List, No. 37.)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Pauper Lunatics' Asylums (Ireland) (Officers' Superannuation) Bill [Bill 135]—

Order for Committee read:—*Moved,* "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair,"—(*Mr. Johnston*) 1181

Committee *deferred* till *Thursday.*

Fishery Acts Amendment (Ireland) Bill [Bill 32]—

Order for Committee read:—*Moved,* "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair,"—(*Colonel Nolan*) 1181

Committee *deferred* till *To-morrow.*

Army Estimates—

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to examine into the Army Estimates and to report their observations thereon to the House,—(*Mr. Secretary Stanhope.*)

Navy Estimates—

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to examine into the Navy Estimates, and to report their observations thereon to the House,—(*Lord George Hamilton.*)

Revenue Departments Estimates—

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to examine into the Estimates for the Revenue Departments, and to report their observations to the House,—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

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ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Oaths Bill [Bill 7]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Bradlaugh*) .. 1182

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "having regard to the fact that the Bill for the Amendment of the Law as to Oaths relates not only to the Parliamentary Oath, but involves grave questions of Constitutional usage affecting every class of persons within these Realms, this House declines to make any alteration in the present Law until the whole subject has been investigated by a Royal Commission,"—(*Mr. Stanley Leighton,*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 247, Noes 137; Majority 110.—(Div. List, No. 38.)

Main Question again proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time:"—*Moved,* "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Tomlinson:*)—*Moved,* "That the Question be now put,"—(*Mr. Bradlaugh:*) —Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 334, Noes 50; Majority 284.—(Div. List, No. 39.)

Main Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 250, Noes 150; Majority 100.

Division List, Ayes and Noes 1233

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Tuesday* 27th March.

Metropolitan Local Government Bill [Bill 14]—

Order for Second Reading read 1236

It being half an hour after Five of the clock, Further Proceedings on Second Reading stood adjourned:—Further Proceedings *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

Parliamentary Voters Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Cremer, Mr. William Crawford, Mr, Abraham* (*Glamorgan*), *Mr. Burt, Mr. Pickard, Mr. James Rowlands*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 171] 1239

[5.40.]

LORDS, THURSDAY, MARCH 15.

Church Discipline Bill (No. 27)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a,"—(*The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*) 1239

After short debate, Motion *agreed to:*—Bill read 2^a accordingly.

Law of Distress Amendment Bill (No. 23)—

Amendments *reported* (according to Order) 1254

Bill to be read 3^a on *Thursday* next; and to be *printed,* as amended. (No. 44.)

Statute Law Revision Bill (No. 35)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a,"—(*The Lord Chancellor*) .. 1255

Motion *agreed to:*—Bill read 2^a accordingly.

Railway and Canal Traffic Bill (No. 41)—

Amendments *reported* (according to Order) 1255

Bill to be read 3^a *To-morrow.*

MERCHANDIZE MARKS ACT—Question, Observations, Lord Herschell:—Short Debate thereon 1256

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—RULES OF DEBATE—RESOLUTION—

Moved, as a new Standing Order—

"That where the House permits reply upon a Motion or a Bill to the Peer who brought it forward, the debate shall not be continued after the reply is over,"—(*The Lord Stratheden and Campbell*) 1262

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn*.

PRIVATE BILL LEGISLATION—MOTION FOR A COMMITTEE—

Message of the House of Commons of Tuesday last on the subject of Private Bill Legislation, *considered* (according to order),

Moved, "That a Committee be appointed, to consist of Six Lords, to join with a Committee of the House of Commons as mentioned in the said Message, to examine into the present system of Private Bill legislation, and to report how far and in what manner, without prejudice to public interests, that system may be modified with a view to the interests of suitors, the economy of the time of Parliament, and the reduction of costs and charges,"—(*The Marquess of Salisbury*) 1264

Motion *agreed to*:—A message sent to the Commons in answer to their message of Tuesday last to inform them that this House has appointed a Committee to consist of Six Lords to join with the Committee of the House of Commons.

Merchant Shipping (Life Saving Appliances) Bill [H.L.]—*Presented* (*The Earl of Onslow*); read 1ª (No. 43) 1265

[6.30.]

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EGYPT—ARMY OF OCCUPATION (NUMBERS)—Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, The Financial Secretary, War Department (Mr. Brodrick) .. 1271

EGYPT—THE EXILES IN CEYLON—Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) .. 1272

THE MAGISTRACY (ENGLAND AND WALES)—THE ABBEYDORE MAGISTRATES—GEORGE WALKINS—Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1272

POST OFFICE—PAY OF PARCEL POSTMEN—Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) 1273
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ADMINISTRATION OF THE WAR OFFICE AND ADMIRALTY—THE ROYAL COMMISSION—Question, Lord Charles Beresford; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1308

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LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—SECTION 30—Question, Mr. T. W. Russell; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) 1311

PRIVILEGE—THE NATIONAL RADICAL UNION—Observations, Mr. Macdonald Cameron 1311

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

SUPPLY—Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Main Question, [12th March], "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—Question again proposed:—Debate *resumed* 1312

ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM OF THE ADMIRALTY [ADJOURNED DEBATE]— After long debate, Question put, and *agreed to.*

SUPPLY—*considered* in Committee—NAVY ESTIMATES—

(In the Committee.)

(1.) 62,400, Men and Boys.

(2.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £3,112,700, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Expense of Wages, &c. to Officers, Seamen, and Boys, Coast Guard, and Royal Marines, and the Half-Pay of Officers, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1889" 1352

Moved, "That a sum, not exceeding £3,112,600, be granted for the said Services,"—(*Lord Charles Beresford*:)—After short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

CIVIL SERVICES.

(3.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £3,614,903, be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charge for the following Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March 1889," viz.:— [Then the several Services are set forth] .. 1356

After debate, *Moved,* "That the Question be now put,"—(*Mr. W. H. Smith*:)—Question put:—The Committee *divided;* Ayes 188, Noes 67; Majority 121.—(Div. List, No. 41.)

Question put, "That a sum, not exceeding £3,614,903, be granted, on account, for or towards the said Service and Revenue Departments:"—The Committee *divided;* Ayes 207, Noes 41; Majority 166.—(Div. List, No. 42.)

(4.) £3,309 7*s.* 4*d.*, Civil Service (Excesses).—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* .. 1400

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow;* Committee to sit again *To-morrow.*

WAYS AND MEANS—

Order for Committee read:—*Moved,* "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair" 1401

After short debate, Committee *deferred* till *To-morrow,* at Two of the clock.

MOTIONS.

Bail (Scotland) Bill—*Ordered* (*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 172] 1404

HOUSE OF COMMONS (ADMISSION OF STRANGERS)—

Select Committee *appointed,* "to inquire into the Rules and Regulations under which Strangers are admitted to this House and its precincts, and to report whether any alterations in the same are expedient,"—(*Viscount Ebrington.*)

ARMY ESTIMATES—

Select Committee *nominated*:—List of the Committee 1404

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT—

Ordered, That so much of the Lords Message as proposes the time and place of meeting of the Joint Committee on Debates and Proceedings in Parliament be now considered.

Lords Message *considered* accordingly.

Ordered, That the Select Committee appointed to join with the Committee of the Lords, to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament, do meet in Room No. 1, Upper Corridor, on Thursday next, at Twelve of the clock.

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords, to acquaint their Lordships that this House hath directed the Select Committee appointed by them to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament, do meet in Room No. 1, Upper Corridor, on Thursday next, at Twelve of the clock.

Ordered, That the Select Committee have power to agree in the appointment of a Chairman.

[12.15.]

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Cathedral Churches Bill (No. 2)—

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee upon the said Bill,"—(*The Lord Bishop of Carlisle*) 1405

Motion *agreed to*:—House in Committee accordingly:—Bill to be *printed,* as amended. (No. 46.)

PRISONS (SCOTLAND)—Question, Observations, The Earl of Elgin; Reply, The Secretary for Scotland (The Marquess of Lothian) .. 1407

THE SOUDAN—KHARTOUM—Question, Observations, The Earl of Dundonald; Reply, The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (The Marquess of Salisbury:)—Short Debate thereon .. 1415

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DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT—

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Ordered, That the Committee appointed by this House do meet the Committee appointed by the Commons in Room No. 1, Upper Corridor, on *Thursday* next at Twelve of the clock.

The Lord Basing named of the Committee in the place of the Lord Colville of Culross.

POOR LAW RELIEF—MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE—

Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire as to the various powers now in possession of the Poor Law guardians, and their adequacy to cope with distress that may from time to time exist in the metropolis and other populous places; and also as to the expediency of concerted action between the Poor Law authorities and voluntary agencies for the relief of distress."—(*The Viscount Gordon, E. Aberdeen.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

[7.45.]

COMMONS, FRIDAY, MARCH 16.

QUESTIONS.

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POST OFFICE—OFFICIALS AT POLITICAL MEETINGS—Question, Mr. Arthur O'Connor ; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1430
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MOTION.

—o—

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION (FOREIGNERS)—
Moved, "That the Select Committee on Emigration and Immigration (Foreigners) do consist of Seventeen Members,"—(*Captain Colomb*) .. 1439
After short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

WAYS AND MEANS—*considered* in Committee—

(In the Committee.)

(1.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the years ending on the 31st day of March 1887 and 1888, the sum of £114,900 7*s.* 4*d.* be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom" 144

Vote *agreed to.*

(2.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the year ending on the 31st day of March 1889, the sum of £11,704,603 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom" 1440

After short debate, *Moved,* "That a reduced sum of £11,703,603 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom,"—(*Mr. T. M. Healy:*)—After further short debate, Question put, and *negatived.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

Resolutions to be reported upon *Monday* next; Committee to sit again upon *Monday* next.

National Debt (Conversion) Bill [Bill 164]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) 1453

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "having regard to great loss and injury sustained by the very large number of persons who hold small amounts of stock, the interest on which is proposed to be reduced, and to the small annual reduction in the public burdens effected by the proposed conversion, this House thinks it inexpedient to make the change proposed." —(*Sir Charles Lewis.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After debate, Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Main Question put:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Tuesday* next, at Two of the clock.

SUPPLY—REPORT—Resolutions [15th March] *reported* 1491

Resolutions 1 and 2 *agreed to.*

(3.) "That a sum, not exceeding £3,614,903, be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charge for the following Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1889"

Moved, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution:"—After short debate, it being ten minutes to Seven of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till *this day.*

The House suspended its Sitting at Seven of the clock.

The House resumed its Sitting at Nine of the clock.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

SUPPLY—Order for Committee read:—*Moved,* "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—

EGYPT—THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL—RESOLUTION—

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House disapproves the acceptance by a Minister of the Crown, holding the office of Judge Advocate General, of the duties of professional advocate to the ex-Khedive Ismail in the prosecution of a hostile claim against the Egyptian Government, as contrary to Constitutional usage and precedent, as liable to serious misconstruction Abroad and at Home, and as calculated to introduce undesirable complications into our relations with Foreign and friendly countries,"—(*Mr. Osborne Morgan*,) instead thereof 1492

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 126, Noes 218; Majority 92.—(Div. List, No. 43.)

Main Question, by leave, *withdrawn:*—Committee upon *Monday* next.

SUPPLY [15TH MARCH]—REPORT [ADJOURNED DEBATE]—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question (this day),

"That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution 'That a sum, not exceeding £3,614,903, be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charge for the Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1889'"

Question again proposed:—Debate *resumed* 1537

After debate, Question put, and *agreed to:*—Subsequent Resolution *agreed to.*

MOTIONS.

Army (Annual) Bill—

Ordered, That the Resolution which, upon the 9th day of this instant March, was reported from the Committee of Supply, and which Resolution was then agreed to by the House, be now read:—

"That a number of Land Forces, not exceeding 149,667, all ranks, be maintained for the Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland at Home and Abroad, excluding Her Majesty's Indian Possessions, during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1889."

Ordered, That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide, during twelve months, for the Discipline and Regulation of the Army, and that Mr. Secretary Stanhope, Lord George Hamilton, The Judge Advocate General, and Mr. Brodrick do prepare and bring it in.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 179].

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT—

Ordered, That the Committee on Debates and Proceedings in Parliament have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

Handloom Weavers (Ireland) Bill—*Ordered* (*Colonel Saunderson, Mr. Macartney, Colonel Waring, Mr. O'Neill*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 175] .. 1547

Land Perpetuity (Ireland) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Macartney, Mr. T. W. Russell, Colonel Waring*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 176] 1548

Coroners' Elections Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Wootton Isaacson, Mr. Gourley, Mr. Ambrose, Colonel Hughes*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 178] 1548

Corn Returns Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Jasper More, Mr. Charles Gray, Colonel Cornwallis West*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 177] 1548

It being One of the clock, Mr. Speaker left the Chair without Question put.

LORDS, MONDAY, MARCH 19.

Page

HOUSE OF LORDS—MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE—

Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the constitution of this House,"—(*The Earl of Rosebery*) 1518

Amendment *moved,*

To leave out all the words after ("That,") for the purpose of inserting the following Resolution—namely, ("it is not a safe thing to place the constitution of this House in the power of a Committee, nor consistent with its dignity to discuss before a Committee the reason for its existence; and if any changes in the constitution of this House are wanted they should be debated and made by the House itself on the motion of the responsible Ministers of the Crown,")—(*The Earl of Wemyss.*)

On Question, That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Motion?—Their Lordships *divided:*—Contents 50; Not-Contents 97: Majority 47.

Resolved in the *negative.*

Then the said Resolution was here inserted, and, a Question being stated thereupon, The Previous Question was put, Whether this Question shall be now put?

Resolved in the *negative.*

Universities (Scotland) Bill [H.L.]—*Presented* (*The Marquess of Lothian*); read 1ª. (No. 47) 1606

[8.45.]

COMMONS, MONDAY, MARCH 19.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

BRIXTON PARK BILL—INSTRUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE—

Moved, "That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Brixton Park Bill, That they do provide that the purchase of the Park be not made until the opinion of the ratepayers of Lambeth has been taken on the desirability of such purchase, and that they do take evidence as to the price demanded, the maintenance of houses on any part of the site, and other matters affecting the property as a place of recreation, and do report thereon to the House."—(*Mr. Broadhurst.*) 1608

Amendment proposed, to leave out all the words after the second word "purchase:"—Amendment *agreed to.*

Main Question, as amended, proposed: — After short debate, Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to.*

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Brixton Park Bill, That they do provide that the purchase of the Park be not made until the opinion of the ratepayers of Lambeth has been taken on the desirability of such purchase.

QUESTIONS.

PRISONS (IRELAND) — MR. WILFRID BLUNT AND MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN—Question, Sir Charles Lewis; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1613

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACT, 1878 — APPEAL FROM THE DUNDEE SHERIFF COURT—Question, Mr. E. Robertson; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1614

SOUTH AFRICA—THE TRANSVAAL REPUBLIC AND ZULULAND—CONFEDERATION—Question, Mr. Kimber; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Baron Henry de Worms) 1614

WAR OFFICE (MANUFACTURING DEPARTMENTS) — SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1859—Question, Colonel Hughes; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) 1615

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CYPRUS (FINANCE, &c.) — THE ANNUAL TRIBUTE — Question, Colonel Bridgeman; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1616

INDIA—THE NATIVE PRINCES—DEFENCE OF THE FRONTIER—Question, Sir Julian Goldsmid; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) 1616

BANKRUPTCY COURT (IRELAND)—CASE OF THOMAS MORONEY, A PRISONER FOR CONTEMPT—Questions, Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth, Mr. Dillon; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1617

SEA AND COAST FISHERIES (IRELAND)—TRAWLING IN LOUGH SWILLY—Question, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1618

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—SENTENCE ON MR. SNELLING, AT SIXMILEBRIDGE—Questions, Mr. Firth; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1618

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—PARCEL POST BASKETS—Questions, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) .. 1619

CIVIL SERVANTS—EMPLOYMENT IN OTHER SERVICES—Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) .. 1619

CIVIL SERVANTS—POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS—Questions, Mr. Mundella, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1621

INLAND REVENUE—STAMP DUTIES—AMOUNT RECEIVED FOR APPRENTICE FEES—Question, Mr. Bristowe; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) 1622

INDIA—THE IRON FLOATING DOCK AT BOMBAY—Question, Admiral Field; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) .. 1623

POOR LAW GUARDIANS (IRELAND)—SURCHARGES ON LOUGHREA GUARDIANS —Question, Mr. Harris; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1623

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (IRELAND) — CONSTABULARY BARRACKS, BALLINASLOE—Question, Mr. Harris; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1624

ADMIRALTY (SHIPS)—H.M.S. "HERO"—Question, Mr. Leatham Bright; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) .. 1625

ADMIRALTY AND WAR OFFICE (NEW) BUILDINGS—Questions, Sir Matthew White Ridley, Mr. Dillwyn; Answers, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) 1626

WALES—TITHE AGITATION IN ANGLESEY—DISTRAINTS AT HENEGLWYS—Question, Mr. J. Bryn Roberts; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1626

LOTTERIES ACT—PRIZE DRAWINGS AT DUNDALK—Question, Mr. Johnston; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1627

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—JUDICIAL RENTS—RETURNS—Question, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1628

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—ARTILLERY VOLUNTEER OFFICERS—UNIFORM—Question, Mr. Mark Stewart; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) 1629

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—ARTILLERY VOLUNTEERS AT SHOEBURYNESS—Question, Mr. Mark Stewart; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) 1629

GIBRALTAR—SMUGGLING INTO SPAIN—Questions, Mr. Jacob Bright; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Baron Henry de Worms) 1629

POST OFFICE—CONTRACTS FOR STAMPS AND STAMPED PAPER—Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) .. 1630

INDIA OFFICE—CONTRACTS FOR STAMPS AND STAMPED PAPER—Questions, Mr. Hanbury, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst), The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) 1631

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)—MARGARINE IN FULHAM WORKHOUSE INFIRMARY—Question, Mr. Bond; Answer, The Secretary to the Local Government Board (Mr. Long) 1632

INDIA—THE PORT OF ADEN—Question, Mr. T. Sutherland; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) .. 1632

NATIONAL DEBT (CONVERSION) BILL—TRUSTEES—Question, Mr. F. S. Powell; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) .. 1633

POST OFFICE—PENSIONS OF LONDON POSTMEN—Question, Mr. Seager Hunt; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) 1633

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—DISTURBANCES AT ENNIS—Questions, Mr. Deasy, Mr. Dillon; Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) 1634

DISTRESSED UNIONS (IRELAND) ACT—Question, Mr. Foley; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1635

CENTRAL AFRICA—ATTACKS BY ARAB SLAVE TRADERS—Question, Mr. Kimber; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1635

ROYAL PARKS AND PLEASURE GARDENS—RICHMOND PARK—THE CLARENCE LANES, ROEHAMPTON—Question, Mr. Bryce; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) 1636

THE SWEATING SYSTEM — REPORT OF MR. BURNETT — Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1637

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—MR. P. O'BRIEN, M.P.—Questions, Mr. Dillon; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) 1638

RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC BILL—Question, Mr. Mundella; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) .. 1639

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY TO THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND [SALARY, &C.] BILL—Question, Mr. John Morley; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1639

RIOTS &C. (IRELAND)—DRUMLISH, CO. LONGFORD—Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) 1640

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—ENNIS POST OFFICE—Question, Mr. Deasy; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) 1640

MOTIONS.

Local Government (England and Wales) Bill—MOTION FOR LEAVE. FIRST READING—

Moved, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the laws relating to Local Government in England and Wales; and for other purposes connected therewith," —(*Mr. Ritchie*) 1640

After long debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill *ordered* (*Mr. William Henry Smith*, *Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*, *Mr. Secretary Matthews*, *Mr. Long*); *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 182.]

SUNDAY CLOSING ACTS (IRELAND)—NOMINATION OF SELECT COMMITTEE—

Moved, "That Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland be a Member of the said Committee" 1702

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to.*

Sunday Closing Acts (Ireland)—*continued.*

Moved, "That Mr. William Johnston be a Member of the said Committee:"—After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Other Members *nominated*.

Moved, "That Mr. T. W. Russell be a Member of the said Committee:"—After short debate, Question put and *agreed to*:—Other Members *nominated*:—Power to send for persons, papers, and records; Five to be the quorum.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland [Salary, &c.]—

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Moved, "That it is expedient to make regulations for the office of Under Secretary and of Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland,"—(*Mr. Arthur Balfour*) 1709

After debate, Question put:—The Committee *divided*; Ayes 159, Noes 103; Majority 56.—(Div. List, No. 44.)

Moved, "That the Chairman do report these Resolutions to the House:"—After short debate, *Moved*, "That the Question be now put,"—(*Mr. W. H. Smith*:)—Question put:—The Committee *divided*; Ayes 146, Noes 86; Majority 60.—(Div. List, No. 45.)

Question put, "That the Chairman do report these Resolutions to the House:"—The Committee *divided*; Ayes 144, Noes 86; Majority 58. (Div. List, No. 46.)

(1.) *Resolved*, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of a Salary to the Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

(2.) *Resolved*, That it is expedient to make regulations for the Office of Under Secretary and of Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow*, at Two of the clock.

Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) Bill [Bill 118]—

Order for Second Reading read 1749

Second Reading *deferred* till *Thursday*.

Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) Bill [Bill 131]—

Order for Second Reading read 1749

Second Reading *deferred* till *Thursday*.

Moved, "That this House do now adjourn,"—(*Mr. T. M. Healy*:)—Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Army (Annual) Bill [Bill 179]—

Order for Second Reading read 1750

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Thursday*.

Copyright (Musical Compositions) Bill [Bill 156]—

Order for Committee read 1750

Committee *deferred* till *Monday* next.

MOTIONS.

City of London (Fire Inquests) Bill—
Select Committee *nominated:*—List of the Committee 1750

Glebe Lands Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Secretary Stanhope, Mr. Raikes, Mr. Stuart-Wortley*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 180] 1750

WAYS AND MEANS
Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill } Resolutions [March 16] *reported,* and *agreed to:*—Bill *ordered* (*Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Jackson*); *presented,* and read the first time 1751

Local Government (England and Wales) Electors Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Ritchie, Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Long*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 181] 1751

NAVY ESTIMATES—
Select Committee *nominated:*—List of the Committee 1751

[12.30.]

LORDS, TUESDAY, MARCH 20.

Lunacy Acts Amendment Bill (No. 22)—
Amendments *reported* (according to Order) 1751
Bill to be *printed,* as amended; and to be read 3ª on *Friday* next. (No. 48.)

Land Transfer Bill (No. 21)—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Lord Chancellor*) .. 1752
Amendment *moved,* to leave out ("now,") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months,")—(*The Lord Arundell of Wardour:*)—After debate, Amendment (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*
After further short debate, Original Motion *agreed to:*—Bill read 2ª accordingly.

EMIGRATION OF PENSIONERS TO NEW ZEALAND—Question, Lord Sandhurst; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for War (Lord Harris) .. 1775

[7.30.]

COMMONS, TUESDAY, MARCH 20.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

South Indian Railway Bill (*by Order*)—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read the third time" 1776
After short debate, Motion *agreed to:*—Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

QUESTIONS.

POST OFFICE—PARCEL POST TO NEW ZEALAND—Question, Mr. Tomlinson; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) 1777

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ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—THE ARTILLERY VOLUNTEERS—MARTINI-HENRY RIFLES—Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) 1777

THE FOOD SUPPLY—FOREIGN MEAT—Question, Captain Cotton; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) .. 1778

THE FOOD SUPPLY—ADULTERATED CHEESE FROM CANADA—Question, Captain Cotton; Answer, The Secretary to the Local Government Board (Mr. Long) 1778

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—EVASION OF CONDITIONS—Question, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) .. 1779

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE ACT, 1875 — VISITORS OF CHANCERY LUNATICS—Question, Mr. Picton; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1779

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—PROBATES AND LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION — DISTRICT PROBATE REGISTRIES — Question, Mr. Tomlinson; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) .. 1780

THE TOLERATION ACT—NONCONFORMISTS IN YORKSHIRE—Questions, Mr. Handel Cossham; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1782

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—SUB-COMMISSIONS IN LONGFORD—Questions, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1783

FISHERIES (ENGLAND AND WALES) — REGULATION OF FISHERIES IN MORECAMBE BAY—Questions, Lord Edward Cavendish, Mr. T. E. Ellis, Mr. Esslemont; Answers, The President of the Board of Trade (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) 1784

WAR OFFICE (STORES)—SALE OF DISUSED CLOTHING—Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Financial Secretary, War Department (Mr. Brodrick) 1785

LAND PURCHASE (IRELAND) ACT, 1885—THE SKINNERS' ESTATE, CO. LONDONDERRY—Questions, Mr. J. E. Ellis, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) 1786

NATIONAL DEBT (CONVERSION) BILL—PENSIONS TO NATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS—Question, Mr. D. Sullivan; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) 1787

POST OFFICE—OFFICIALS AT POLITICAL MEETINGS—Question, Mr. D. Sullivan; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) .. 1788

TORQUAY HARBOUR AND DISTRICT ACT, 1886—THE SALVATION ARMY—Questions, Mr. James Stuart, Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Mr. Barran; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1788

ADMINISTRATION OF THE NAVY—CAPTAIN HALL, DIRECTOR OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE—Question, Lord Charles Beresford; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) 1790

WALES—THE TITHE AGITATION—DISTURBANCES IN ANGLESEY—Question, Mr. J. Bryn Roberts; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1791

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (IRELAND)—PAYMENTS TO ROAD CONTRACTORS — TIPPERARY, N.R. — Question, Mr. P. J. O'Brien; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1791

HAYTI—IMPRISONMENT OF MR. COLES—Question, Colonel Duncan; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) .. 1791

PARLIAMENT—ELIGIBILITY OF FOREIGN AGENTS—Question, Mr. Tomlinson; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) .. 1792

REVISED EDITION OF THE STATUTES—PUBLICATION—Question, Mr. Howell; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) .. 1792

PUBLIC TRUSTEE BILL—Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1793

TITHE RENTCHARGE—LEGISLATION—Question, Mr. H. Gardner; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1793

THE METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS—Question, Mr. Firth; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1793

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—Questions, Mr. John Morley, Sir John Lubbock, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1794

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ENGLAND AND WALES)—POOR LAW GUARDIANS—Question, Mr. Broadhurst; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) 1794

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—MR. P. O'BRIEN, M.P.—Question, Mr. Dillon; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) 1795

MOTIONS.

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION (FOREIGNERS) — NOMINATION OF SELECT COMMITTEE—

Moved, "That the Select Committee on Emigration and Immigration (Foreigners) do consist of Seventeen Members,"—(*Captain Colomb*) .. 1795

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "Seventeen," in order to insert the word "Nineteen,"—(*Mr. Fenwick.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'Seventeen' stand part of the Question:"—Question put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the word 'Nineteen' be there inserted, put," and *agreed to.*

Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to:*—List of the Committee 1797

Public Worship Facilities Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Salt, Baron Dimsdale, Mr. Morrison, Mr. Whitmore*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 183] 1797

Public Health (**Prevention of Infectious Diseases, &c.**) **Bill**—*Ordered* (*Mr. Hastings, Dr. Farquharson, Mr. Francis Powell, Mr. Wharton, Mr. Hardcastle*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 184] 1797

Clerks of the Peace Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Brunner, Mr. Tatton Egerton, Captain Cotton, Mr. Walter M'Laren*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 185] 1797

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

National Debt (**Conversion**) **Bill** [Bill 164]—

Bill *considered* in Committee 1793

After some time spent therein, *Moved,* "That the Chairman do report the Bill, as amended, to the House:"—After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to:*—Bill *reported:*—After further short debate, Bill, as amended, to be considered *To-morrow.*

East India (**Purchase and Construction of Railways**) **Bill**—

Bill *considered* in Committee 1847

Bill *reported,* without Amendment; to be read the third time upon *Thursday.*

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—ORDER OF PUBLIC BUSINESS—Observations, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith); Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, Mr. W. H. Smith 1848

The House suspended its Sitting at Seven of the clock.

The House resumed its Sitting at Nine of the clock.

MOTIONS.

MEMORANDUM OF SIR CHARLES WARREN (MR. BAGGALLAY)—RESOLUTION—

Moved, "That this House regrets that the Chief Commissioner of Metropolitan Police should, in an official Memorandum read to his subordinates, have reflected on the administration of the Law by Mr. Ernest Baggallay, one of the Stipendiary Magistrates of the Metropolis, and is of opinion that such a course must tend to produce a most prejudicial effect by weakening the authority of the Magistrate over the Police within his jurisdiction,"—(*Mr. Pickersgill*) 1848

Question proposed, "That the Question be not now put,"—(*Mr. Secretary Matthews:*)—After debate, Motion for Previous Question and Original Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

WORKMEN (WOOLWICH AND ENFIELD)—Motion for a Select Committee, Colonel Hughes 1868

[House counted out] [10.40.]

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21.

QUESTION.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (IRELAND)—PAYMENTS TO ROAD CONTRACTORS —TIPPERARY, N.R.—Question, Mr. P. J. O'Brien; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) 1872

ORDERS OF THE DAY—

Ordered, That the Committee on the Consolidated Fund Bill (No. 1) and the Consideration of the National Debt (Conversion) Bill, as amended, have precedence of the Orders of the Day subsequent to the Land Law (Ireland) Acts Amendment Bill; and that so much of the Standing Orders, "Sittings of the House," as relates to the interruption of Business, and the Adjournment of the House at half-past Five, and at Six o'clock, be suspended during To-day's Sitting, until the proceedings on the Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill and the National Debt (Conversion) Bill are concluded,—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Land Law (Ireland) Acts Amendment Bill [Bill 1]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Parnell*) .. 1873

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "no Bill providing for a composition of arrears of rent in Ireland will be satisfactory to this House, and effectual for the relief of the tenants, which does not at the same time deal with their debts to other creditors besides the landlords,"—(*Mr. Powell-Williams,*)—instead thereof.

Land Law (Ireland) Acts Amendment Bill—continued.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 243, Noes 328; Majority 85.

Division List, Ayes and Noes 1947

Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to.*

National Debt (Conversion) Bill [Bill 161]—

Order for Consideration, as amended, read 1956

Moved, "That the Bill be re-committed,"—(*Mr. Cozens-Hardy:*)—Question put, and *agreed to.*

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee, That they have power to consider a Clause to empower trustees to invest the proceeds of funds converted or exchanged under the Bill in certain other securities.

Bill *considered* in Committee:—An Amendment made; Bill *reported;* as amended, *considered:*—Further Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time *To morrow.*

It being twenty-five minutes after Six of the clock, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

LORDS.

SAT FIRST.

MONDAY, MARCH 19.

The Duke of Rutland, after the death of his brother.

COMMONS.

NEW WRITS ISSUED.

MONDAY, MARCH 5.

For *the Chichester Division of Sussex*, *v.* The Honble. Charles Henry Gordon Lennox, Earl of March, Chiltern Hundreds.

FRIDAY, MARCH 9.

For *Merthyr Tydvil*, *v.* Charles Herbert James, esquire, Manor of Northstead.

MONDAY, MARCH 12.

For *Glamorgan County* (*Western or Gower Division*), *v.* Frank Ash Yeo, esquire, deceased.

THURSDAY, MARCH 15.

For *Leicestershire* (*Melton Division*), *v.* The Right honble. John James Robert Manners, G.C.B., commonly called Lord John Manners, now Duke of Rutland, called up to the House of Peers.

NEW MEMBERS SWORN.

THURSDAY, MARCH 15.

County of Sussex (*South Western or Chichester Division*)—Lord Walter Charles Gordon Lennox.

TUESDAY, MARCH 20.

Merthyr Tydvil Borough—David Alfred Thomas, esquire.

HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

IN THE

THIRD SESSION OF THE *TWENTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*,
APPOINTED TO MEET 5 AUGUST, 1886, IN THE FIFTIETH
YEAR OF THE REIGN OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1888.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 2nd March, 1888.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Church Discipline * (27); Ecclesiastical Procedure * (28).

Second Reading—Lunacy Acts Amendment (22).

Select Committee—Truro Cathedral Fabric and Services (3); Lord Ker (Marquess of Lothian) *added;* Lord Magheramorne *disch.*

HOUSE OF LORDS—CONSTITUTION OF THE HOUSE.

WITHDRAWAL OF MOTION.

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN: It may be convenient if I state to your Lordships that I do not intend to bring forward the Motion which stands in my name for Tuesday next, relating to the constitution of this House, but that I intend, with the permission of the House, to bring in a Bill dealing with the subject as soon as possible.

TECHNICAL SCHOOLS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1887.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

LORD NORTON, in rising to ask the Secretary for Scotland, What steps have been taken preparatory to the Technical Instruction Act for Scotland coming into operation; whether there has been any expression of public opinion for or against it; and, if he will present to the House any instructions which may have been sent out from his Department on the subject? said, the Technical Instruction Act for Scotland was passed in the midnight hours at the fag end of last Session. A similar Bill for England was postponed, but now it was about immediately to be revived. It seemed to him, however, of the greatest importance that before they came to consider the English Bill, they should know what steps were being taken, or were found to be necessary, to bring the Scottish Act into operation, and how, in fact, the Scottish people looked upon the Act with which they were now for the first time brought face to face. He considered that the Scottish Act was preferable to the English Bill in this respect, that it put the establishment and maintenance of these schools into the hands of the existing school boards; whereas the English Bill proceeded to constitute a new and additional Agency of Public Instruction—namely, the Local Authorities. But both the Scottish Act and the English Bill agreed in this very great defect—that they gave no definition whatever of what was meant by technical instruction, except that it was to be anything or everything that from time to time the Department of Science and Art might choose to give grants for. He really wanted to know how that very shrewd nation, the Scotch, looked upon an Act which was to give this indefinite, unlimited power of public educational undertaking and taxation? He had no wish to dispute what he believed they were all agreed upon—that some improvement of technical instruction for our artizans was much to be desired; but the more important it was, the more they should take care that the best means were taken to secure the object in view. He had no doubt there were some manufacturers—but, certainly, they were far from being all, and he would say they did not include the most enterprizing—who would be very happy to have better apprentices trained for them at public expense. There were many of the manufacturers of this country who were already providing special instruction for their own workmen. There were also Companies and Institutes and Endowments, which were all increasingly meeting these requirements of education infinitely better than public authorities could. The only question was whether such provision—no doubt the best—could be expected to be sufficient for the requirements of the whole country. At all events, he thought they would be agreed that they should take the greatest possible care that, in enabling public bodies to undertake this work of technical education, they should not check or supersede that which was by far the best mode for the special training of the artizans of this country. If technical schools were intended to undertake training workmen for manufacturers, as in a small way was already being done by the industrial schools for children thrown on the State, they would incur the Protectionist objection to such schools which had been made in America—that they had no right to levy a general tax for particular interests. But if, on the other hand, these technical schools were intended to be strictly confined to the elementary technical instruction which was applicable to all arts and trades, the question then arose whether our higher elementary schools were not already sufficient for the purpose or easily adaptable to it. He was afraid that if the public authorities got this work into their hands, they would very soon aim at something much further—the establishment of national workshops throughout the country. That was not a vain fear, because the danger had already been experienced and protested against by manufacturers in Yorkshire. Technical instruction, undefined as in the Act, would mean to most minds a secondary stage of education; and if only such teaching as design drawing or use of common tools were meant, it should be so distinctly stated. He would be glad if the noble Marquess could tell him whether there was to be a special Code to regulate these technical schools, and if any provision had been made for training masters and teachers specially for these schools. The English Bill proposed to submit the establishment of such schools to a poll of ratepayers under the Ballot Act. If that clause were to be dropped there would be the contrary danger of their establishment without any consultation of the ratepayers. He understood his noble Friend (the Marquess of Lothian) would lay before the House the actual instructions which had been issued from his Department preparatory to these schools coming into operation, and he thought it was essential that they should without delay be put in possession of those instructions before they were called upon to consider the promised Technical Schools Bill for England.

Lord LAMINGTON said, he had to complain that under the Scottish Act of last year, which was an ill-considered and most objectionable measure, the school boards had power to embark in enormous expenditure, and future boards would have no power to check the system they had inaugurated. The old parochial system of Scotland was the admiration of the whole Continent, and he did not think matters had been improved by the establishment of school boards and compulsory education. The Technical Instruction Act did not define anything at all, and he contended that to give such powers it gave to any school boards was to saddle upon the inhabitants any amount of expenses. He thought that Scotland had been over-legislated for in educational matters, and he hoped the noble Marquess had no intention of putting the Act into operation.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (The Marquess of LOTHIAN), who was very imperfectly heard, said, he felt some difficulty in answering the two speeches to which their Lordships had just listened, but he would do so as best he could. The noble Lord who asked for the production of Papers (Lord Norton) had asked a number of Questions, to some of which he (the Marquess of Lothian) hoped to be able to give an answer. The Technical Instruction Act not having yet come into operation, he had no experience upon which to give information. But the noble Lord who spoke last (Lord Lamington) objected to the Act altogether. He (the Marquess of Lothian) regretted that the noble Lord had not been present at the midnight hours of last Session, to which allusion had been made, to move the rejection of the Bill. That, it appeared to him, would have been the time to have raised the objections the noble Lord now stated. As to the concluding portion of the noble Lord's remarks, he understood his noble Friend to suggest that he should treat the Act of last year as non-existent. He (the Marquess of Lothian) was not prepared to be so disrespectful to Parliament as to take no notice whatever of an Act that had been passed by both Houses. But the questions raised by the noble Lord (Lord Norton) were not very easy to answer, because his noble Friend seemed to imagine that there were duties pertaining to the Scottish Education Department which did not actually fall on that Department. He asked whether any Code had been prepared by the Scottish Education Department with the view of carrying out the Act of last year? The preparation of a Code to regulate the grants to Technical Schools did not rest with the Scottish Education Department, but with the Department of Science and Art, and the Scottish Education Department had not prepared such a Code. All that Department was empowered to do was simply to show how far it was possible to take action under the Act of last year; and the Circular which had been issued was not, as the noble Lord supposed, in the nature of an instruction, but simply in the nature of a guidance, and for the information of Scottish school boards as to what was possible under the Act, with a view of eliciting from them what they thought would be desirable, and what would be the best means of giving effect to the provisions of the Statute. With reference to the question of apprenticeship, one of the chief reasons why an Act of this kind was desired in Scotland was that the whole system of apprenticeship had been entirely altered by the sub-division of labour and many other causes affecting labour. It was, therefore, desired that some means should be introduced by which young men should receive training, and be enabled to make use of the training which was required. As to the introduction of the Technical Instruction Act into every school, he did not himself believe it would have much effect so far as the elementary schools were concerned. He thought it was rather in the secondary schools that the Act would have most effect. But the principal advantage of the Act would be found in connection with the establishment of evening schools for technical instruction for those who desired it. With regard to the definition of "technical schools," he entirely agreed with his hon. Friend that no practical definition had been given, and anyone who had tried for himself to give a practical definition would have found himself exceedingly puzzled to do so. He had no means of ascertaining at that moment what advantage would be taken of the Act by the people of Scotland, and he did not know how many school boards would take advantage of it. It was impossible at present to go beyond what he had been doing—namely, issuing from the Department a Circular stating what was the view of the Department of the advantages of the Act, and asking the opinions of the school boards and the public upon the form in which it should come into force. If the noble Lord would do him the honour to come to Dover House, he would be most happy to give him all the information in his power, and to answer as far as he could questions that could not be so easily answered in that House. As to laying upon the Table the Circular that had been issued by the Department, he did not think there would be any objection to doing so.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY said, he did not share in the views of the noble Lord opposite (Lord Lamington) as to the legislation of last Session. He asked whether the noble Marquess could tell the House of any school boards in Scotland that had taken action under the Bill of last year?

THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN, in reply, said, that many formalities must be complied with first, and it was quite impossible under the Act for any school board to take advantage of the Act until after the elections; and the whole question must come before the Department before the schools were established.

LUNACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

(NO. 22.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that there really was nothing to explain with which the House was not already fully acquainted, the Bill having been passed three times through their Lordships' House without any substantial changes. It would be enough to recall shortly the leading points in the Bill, which were—(1) The introduction of a judicial authority for ordering the detention of a person as a lunatic; (2) orders of detention to come to an end unless renewed; (3) protection to medical men and others against vexatious actions where they have acted in good faith; (4) restrictions on opening new private asylums; (5) various amendments with a view to consolidating the Lunacy Laws. It would be remembered that the Bill was accepted by him from the noble and learned Lord (Lord Herschell), to whom it was handed down by the noble and learned Lord (Lord Selborne). While dealing with some subjects of a very delicate and controversial kind, it had been accepted as a valuable measure in all quarters, though, no doubt, regarded as in the nature of a compromise, and not, indeed, going so far as he himself might desire. It had already received very full and careful consideration in their Lordships' House; and having been adopted at some stage of its history by each Party represented in "another place," it might be expected to be received in a like spirit there. If the House should pass the Bill in good time, no blame would attach to the House or the Government if the Bill did not become law in this Session.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN said, he echoed the wish of the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack that the Bill might become law, and that no obstructive tactics "elsewhere" would prevent so important a measure from being added to the Statute Book. He regretted, however, that the Government had not taken steps to put an end to the scandals which were alleged to exist by getting rid of the licensed houses. As long as what Lord Shaftesbury called "the evil system of profit" continued to exist, as long as the incarceration of a fellow-creature in a mad-house should be the source of large profit to anyone, so long might they expect a continuance of the scandals to which he alluded. He noticed, therefore, with regret that existing licensed houses were not to be interfered with. The only way to prevent scandals, as private asylums were to be continued, would be a thorough system of visitation; but the present system could not be thus described, the Lunacy Commissioners being too few in number to inquire closely into the cases of 80,000 lunatics. He strongly advocated the establishment of houses for the reception of paying patients by the Local Authorities. The authorities, he felt sure, would be the gainers. There was a large number of persons in asylums who were supported at the public expense, and who were able to support themselves; and if provision were made for receiving paying patients at moderate rates, the expenditure of the counties might be considerably reduced. However, he did not intend to offer any opposition to the second reading, and hoped that the Bill would not this year be included in the "massacre of the innocents" at the end of the Session.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Friday* next.

NAVY—IRON-CLADS ON THE INDIAN STATION.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

VISCOUNT MIDLETON, in rising to ask Her Majesty's Government, Whether it is the fact that there is not a single iron-clad on the Indian Station; and, if so, what steps will be taken for the construction of a dock at Bombay? said, that publicity had recently been given to a statement, which came apparently from a well-informed source, that there was not an iron-clad on the Indian Station, and that this was due to the absence of dock accommodation. The statement might be exaggerated, and, if so, it was desirable it should be corrected, for such statements produced an idea of weakness at home and abroad, which it was undesirable should prevail. We knew that the French had a numerous, if not a powerful, squadron, of the doings of which we had heard a good deal lately; and the Germans had a squadron on the coast of Africa. The French ships at Tonquin were within easy reach of Calcutta and Madras. He did not know whether the French or the Germans had any iron-clads, but it seemed strange that we should leave without the protection of a single iron-clad so large a coast and two important coaling stations. As to dock accommodation, we had spent £70,000 at Bombay on a dock available for ships of comparatively small size, but not large enough for anything in the shape of an iron-clad, and scarcely large enough for sea-going cruisers. The only available docks were at Hong Kong, the Cape, and Mauritius, and the passage of iron-clads through the Suez Canal was attended with considerable delay and expense. Some years ago there was a scheme for constructing a dock at Bombay, but it fell through, mainly on account of the inability of the Secretary of State for India to provide the necessary funds. He hoped that the same disability would not attach to any such scheme now. He was told that lately instructions had been sent to an engineer officer in the Bombay Presidency to prepare plans and sections for the construction of a dock, and he trusted that the work would soon be commenced.

LORD ELPHINSTONE, in reply, said, it was quite true that we had no iron-clad on the East Indian Station, as the Government considered that neither the requirements of the Service nor those of British commerce necessitated—at present, at any rate—the placing of an iron-clad on that station. The *Bacchante*, the present flagship, was an iron ship, sheathed with wood and coppered, and was considered by the Admiralty better suited for the requirements of the East Indian Station than an iron-clad—so much so that the Admiralty were deliberately sending another ship of the same class out to relieve her. With regard to the dock accommodation, the Admiralty were fully alive to the necessity of having a dock at Bombay capable of taking in armoured ships, should it be found necessary to place one on that station, and they were in communication with the India Office on the subject. There was a dock at the Mauritius which would take in any of the vessels on the Indian Station with the exception of the flagship, and there were docks at Singapore and the Cape of Good Hope which would take in a second-class iron-clad. In reply to a Question put in the House of Commons, Sir John Gorst had said—

> "Estimates and plans are being prepared and schemes have been submitted by the Secretary of State to the consideration of the Admiralty as to providing graving dock accommodation in Bombay Harbour for iron-clads and large mercantile steamers."

The relative strength of our squadron there compared favourably with that of any foreign Power; and so long as that preponderance was maintained there was no object in strengthening it by the addition of an iron-clad. As compared with the French Squadron in the East Indies, the French had three vessels and three gunboats, mounting 33 guns, as against our 13 ships with 100 guns, independent of two double turret vessels and two gunboats in Bombay Harbour. The noble Lord suggested that the French Squadron from Saigon and Tonquin might make an attack on Calcutta before our ships could be brought round from Bombay. He must point out that Saigon was in China, and that it would be the duty of the Admiral on that station to look after French ships. The French force numbered 11, inclusive of six gun vessels, mounting 56 guns; in addition to which they had 19 small gunboats of 112 to 120 tons, carrying two guns each, in reserve. These small gunboats were, however, for river and harbour service. The British China Squadron numbered 19 vessels, with 121 guns, two of which were iron-clads. As the object of the noble Viscount was to call attention to the want of dock accommodation at Bombay, he could only say it was at present under the consideration of the India Office and the Admiralty.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount CROSS) said, he could not allow a question as to dock accommodation at Bombay to pass without saying one or two words. He felt quite as much as did the noble Lord behind him the absolute necessity of proper dock accommodation at Bombay, and he was happy to say he had every reason to believe that the correspondence between the Admiralty and the India Office was now rapidly drawing to a satisfactory conclusion. Not a moment should be lost on his part, after the matter had been arranged with the Admiralty, in carrying out the works at Bombay, which he held to be necessary for the defence, not only of India, but also of the commerce of the United Empire.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH said, he feared that the noble Lord who had answered the Question on behalf of the Government had taken a rose-coloured view of the situation. Some of the dock accommodation mentioned was not of a public character. The *Iron Duke*, which was not one of the largest vessels, found the greatest difficulty in docking at Hong Kong, and other vessels had been obliged to go to Nagasaki and other docks belonging to Foreign Powers. We could not always reckon on such accommodation being available. It was preposterous that, with our enormous commerce in the Indian Seas, we should not have dock accommodation for an iron-clad. Mention had been made of two Foreign Powers which had squadrons in these waters, but there was a third which was rapidly increasing its naval strength in the China Seas. He hoped that the Government would lose no time in constructing a proper dock at Bombay, and in giving their serious attention to the insufficiency of the dock accommodation at Hong Kong.

EXTRAORDINARY TITHE—TITHE RENTCHARGE (EXTRAORDINARY) REDEMPTION ACT, 1886.—QUESTION.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (The Duke of BUCKINGHAM and CHANDOS) said, it would be in the recollection of their Lordships that in the year 1886 the question of extraordinary tithe received a great deal of notice in consequence of certain occurrences which drew public attention to it. At the same time, a Bill was being passed through Parliament for the settlement of the question, which, no doubt, demanded as early a settlement as possible. Although it was considered that some difficulties might arise in the adjustment of the matter, the Land Commissioners, in their Report last year, said that it was not possible to foresee causes of delay which might arise in carrying out the Act, but that endeavours would be made to bring the work as near completion as possible at the close of the next financial year. They were now approaching the close of the financial year, but as yet there were no signs of the completion of the work. Meanwhile, there had been much difficulty in connection with the collection of tithe, and there were many refusals to pay pending a settlement of the question. As there had been no notification of any progress being made in the matter since the Land Commissioners issued a paragraph a year ago, he ventured to ask the Government, Whether they can inform the House when the Land Commissioners for England are likely to announce their first case of ascertained capital value of extraordinary tithe *re* Redemption Act, 1886?

EARL BROWNLOW, in reply, said, that the Land Commissioners for England expected to be able to grant certificates of the capital value of extraordinary tithe in certain parishes in the course of the next few days. He might add that further information upon the subject would be found in the last year's annual Report of the Commissioners.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL [H.L.]

A Bill for better enforcing Church discipline—Was *presented* by The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury; read 1ª. (No. 27.)

ECCLESIASTICAL PROCEDURE BILL [H.L.]

A Bill for amending the procedure in ecclesiastical cases touching the doctrine and ritual of the Church of England—Was *presented* by The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury; read 1ª. (No. 28.)

[House adjourned at half past Five o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 2nd March, 1888.

MINUTES.]—SELECT COMMITTEE — Pilotage, *appointed.*

SUPPLY—*considered in Committee—Resolutions* [March 1] *reported.*

QUESTIONS.

LAND ACT (IRELAND) 1870—REPAYMENT OF LOANS.

MR. LEA (Londonderry, S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If the time for repayment of the loans to purchasers, under the Irish Land Act of 1870, has been extended to the full extent proposed in the Land Act of last year; and, if not, can he state on what grounds?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): Sub-section 1 of Section 24 of the Land Act (Ireland) 1887, has been carried out to the full extent contemplated by the Legislature. The power of further extension of the period of repayment given by Sub-section 2 is optional and dependent upon special circumstances; very few applications for the exercise of it have been received; only four are now open; and these are under the consideration of the Board of Works.

MR. LEA: By "optional," do you mean optional for the Treasury or optional for the persons?

MR. JACKSON: Optional for the Treasury, of course. I believe the words of the Act are, "it may be extended." I should be glad to speak to the hon. Gentleman about it.

LAW AND JUSTICE (SCOTLAND)—MR. GEORGE ROBERTSON.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether his attention has been called to the case of Mr. George Robertson, who was arrested in Glasgow on December 1, 1887, on a charge of having forged an order to an iron broker to sell 15,000 tons of iron with a view of influencing the iron market; whether it is true that the consent of the Crown to Robertson's liberation was not given for a week after his committal for further examination, although bail was applied for at that date, and that, after his liberation on bail, his agent on his behalf made repeated applications to the Fiscal to have him brought to trial on bail in order that he might have an opportunity of proving his innocence; whether, on the 22nd instant, the Fiscal informed Mr. Robertson's agent that proceedings against him were to be abandoned; and, whether, as Mr. Robertson has suffered three weeks' imprisonment, has been obliged to part with his furniture to make up the bail money, and has lost his situation and cannot obtain another with the stigma of a grave charge undisposed of, he will either direct that he be brought to trial and afforded an opportunity of clearing himself or admit that the authorities acted on mistaken information in his case?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I am aware of what was done in this case. The accused person was not admitted to bail for a week, and would not have been admitted sooner under any circumstances when the charge was of so serious a nature. It is the fact that the accused's solicitor called on the Procurator Fiscal more than once to ask when the trial would take place, and that on the 22nd of February he was informed that no further proceedings would be taken at present. I am not prepared to order a trial; and I am not prepared to admit that the authorities acted on mistaken information in the case.

LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)—DISTURBANCE AT DROMORE, CO. TYRONE.

MR. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) (for Mr. M. J. KENNY) (Tyrone, Mid) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If 14 persons were summoned before the Dromore, County Tyrone, Bench of Magistrates, and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment (with option of fine) for lighting tar barrels on the occasion of the release of Mr. William O'Brien, M.P. from prison—namely, 21st January; if it is a fact that the police did not intervene until the celebration had proceeded for a considerable time, and then not on the grounds of its alleged illegality, but what they considered its undue prolongation; and, if it was given in evidence by the police that a reason for stopping the bonfire was that the bell of the Protestant Episcopal Church had been rung, in order to bring in an opposing crowd; and, if so, why no steps were taken by the police to bring the persons responsible to justice?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I am informed that on the occasion referred to a mob collected and lighted tar-barrels in the public streets. The police were precluded from intervening at at all, as there were only two of them available for duty on the occasion, and they were perfectly powerless in face of the numbers opposed to them. They succeeded, however, in identifying 14 of the offenders, who were subsequently proceeded against by summons, with the result stated in the Question. The police report that on the church bell commencing to ring it was at once stopped at their request.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): Arising out of the answer of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, might I ask for what reason he calls it a "mob," and not a crowd?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

FOREIGN OFFICE—MR. BONHAM, CONSUL AT BOULOGNE.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Is it a fact that Mr. Bonham, Consul at Boulogne, was absent from May to December last year; what was the cause of his absence, and what duty, if any, at the Foreign Office was he employed about, and if he had received additional pay for so doing; did the Vice Consul, Captain Surplice, receive additional pay during Mr. Bonham's absence; and, if the Vice Consul passed the usual examination on his present appointment?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Mr. Bonham was absent for the period stated. He was on ordinary leave during May and June. During the remainder of the time he was continuously engaged on important special service in the Foreign Office, for which he received no additional pay. Captain Surplice, the Vice Consul, receives the usual acting allowance during the Consul's absence. Captain Surplice, being permitted to trade and being consequently not in the regular Consular Service, was, under the regulations, not required to pass an examination.

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)—PAROCHIAL MEDICAL OFFICERS.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether it is the general rule to appoint in county districts parochial medical officers who are resident in the districts; and, if so, why this rule has not been followed in the Waters Upton District of the Wellington Union, in the County of Salop?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. LONG) (Wilts, Devizes) (who replied) said: As a general rule, Guardians, when the circumstances admit of it, appoint as district medical officers medical practitioners who are resident in the districts for which they are to act. In cases such as that referred to the appointment is annual; and the Guardians in December last, by 15 votes to 3, determined to re-appoint the non-resident practitioner, who has held the office for 10 years. The Guardians state that the duties during the period have been discharged with perfect satisfaction to themselves and to the patients. The officer is daily in the district; and it is a condition of his re-appointment that he shall have a surgery in the district, where he is to attend at least two days a-week. The only objection which has been made to the appointment is by the unsuccessful candidate, who has been resident in the district about 15 months. The Board did not consider that the circumstances were such as to preclude their acceding to the wishes of the large majority of the Guardians, and they, therefore, assented to the appointment.

METROPOLITAN POLICE (NUMBERS).

Mr. FIRTH (Dundee) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he can state the number of men which have been added to the Metropolitan Police Force since January, 1887; what is the present total strength of such Force; and, what, if any, is the increase in the number of men employed on detective service since that date, and what is the total number of men now employed on such service?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): Three hundred and eighty men have been added to the Force since the 1st of January, 1887. The present strength of the Force is 14,191. The Chief Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner are of opinion that it is not advisable that information should be made public as to the number of men employed in the detective service. I must, therefore, ask the hon. Member not to press for this information.

Mr. FIRTH asked if the request not to press the Question applied to the simple inquiry whether the number of detectives had been increased?

Mr. MATTHEWS: There has been a slight increase; if the hon. and learned Member wishes I will give him the numbers privately; but it would not be to the public interest that they should be made public.

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)—ELECTION OF GUARDIANS—COVENTRY.

Mr. BALLANTINE (Coventry) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether a Memorial has been presented to the Board from Coventry, asking for an inquiry into the conduct of the late elections of Guardians for the City of Coventry; whether a statutory declaration of Mrs. Ward, the wife of the late workhouse master, accompanied the Memorial, in which she alleged that a conspiracy had existed between certain of the Guardians and the master to carry Conservatives at the last three elections of Guardians, by burning Liberal voting papers, and introducing into the counting room voting papers forged in the names of Conservatives; whether it was also alleged by her, that during the 1886 elections the medical officer, Dr. Iliffe, took the impression in wax of the lock of the strong room, in which the voting papers were deposited, and that at the election of 1887 a clerk named Oswin filled in voting papers with the names of Conservatives; whether Ward, the late master of the workhouse, who has now absconded, has made a statement corroborating his wife's allegations, and admitting that he himself burned the Liberal voting papers; whether Oswin at first entirely confirmed Mrs. Ward's statement, and admitted that he had forged 50 or 60 voting papers in the names of Conservatives in the election of 1887, although he now repudiates his admission, and alleges it to be false; whether Dr. Iliffe has admitted in his letter to the Board that he took the impression in wax of the lock of a safe at the workhouse, although giving an innocent reason for the act; whether the voting papers of the 1887 election, among which are those alleged to have been forged by Oswin, are at the present time in the custody of the Guardians; and, whether he has refused to direct an inquiry to be held, and whether he will reconsider his decision?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Long) (Wilts, Devizes) (who replied) said: The Local Government Board have had several communications with reference to the election of Guardians for the Coventry Union. Mrs. Ward, the wife of the late master of the workhouse, has made allegations to the effect of those referred to in the Question. The late master appears to have absconded about May last, when there were defalcations in his accounts; and the statement made by him in corroboration of his wife's allegations was forwarded to the Board from California, where it is supposed he still is. The boy Oswin made a statement which supported Mrs. Ward's allegations; but when he was taken to a Commissioner for the purpose of verifying a declaration which had been prepared, he at once said that the statement was not true, and the declaration was not made. This denial has since been made by him in the form of a statutory declaration. Dr. Iliffe, who has been the medical officer of the workhouse 10 years, states that the master said that a duplicate key of his safe in which he kept the petty cash had been lost, and that an attempt was made to take an impression of the key in wax. Two persons who were present at the time have made statutory declarations confirming Dr. Iliffe's statement as to the purpose for which the wax impression was attempted to be made. I have no reason to doubt that the voting papers in the election of 1887 are in the custody of the Guardians. The only persons with regard to whom the Board have any jurisdiction, and against whom allegations have been made, are the clerk to the Guardians and Dr. Iliffe, the medical officer of the workhouse. The allegations affecting these officers are emphatically denied by them; and the Board, after carefully considering the several declarations and other statements which have been submitted to them, are of opinion that, at present, there is no such corroboration of the allegation of Mrs. Ward as would justify them instituting any formal inquiry into the matter.

In answer to a further Question from Mr. BALLANTINE,

MR. LONG said, that the charge had been brought by only one person, whose evidence did not appear to be very reliable, and was not corroborated by anyone exept the lad Oswin, who, on being asked to make a statutory declaration, had withdrawn everything that he had said.

INDIA (FINANCE, &c.)—RAILWAYS.

SIR UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH (Lancashire, Clitheroe) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, If he can give any figures explaining the grounds on which it is anticipated that, in spite of the falling off in the railway receipts in India from the Budget Estimate of 1887-8, there is no cause for apprehension as to the profitable working of the lines?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): The net traffic receipts from open railways in 1884-5 were Rx. 7,685,000. In 1888-9 they are at present estimated at Rx. 8,661,000, showing an improvement of Rx. 976,000. The capital outlay on open lines since 1884-5 is about 12 crores of rupees; but a portion of this has been expended on branches and extensions which have not yet come into operation. If, however, the whole of that outlay be charged with interest at 4 per cent, the sum would be Rx. 480,000. The receipts from open lines, therefore, after allowing for the interest on the additional capital, show an improvement of Rx. 496,000.

INDIA—REPORT OF THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION.

SIR UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH (Lancashire, Clitheroe) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether the Report of the Commission which has been inquiring into the Civil Service in India will be laid upon the Table of both Houses?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): Yes. The Secretary of State stated in "another place" that he would lay the Report on the Table, unless he heard from the Viceroy to the contrary, in the course of this week.

CENTRAL AFRICA — THE SLAVE TRADE — ATTACK ON PRESBYTERIAN MISSION STATIONS.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether Her Majesty's Government has received any despatches from Consuls Hawes and O'Neill, relative to the reported massacre by slave-raiding Arabs on the north end of Lake Nyassa and their attack upon the English Consuls and other British subjects in that district; and, whether Consul Hawes has been furnished with a steamer to enable him to cruise upon the Lake, as suggested when he was first appointed?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The despatches received from Consul Hawes show that, in his opinion, the disturbances did not arise from slave-raiding. A quarrel broke out on an insignificant matter between the Arabs and the Natives, in which a Native Chief was killed. In retaliation about 30 Arabs, mostly women, were slaughtered. This led to a war, in which Native villages were fired; but there does not seem to have been a massacre. It is not clear how the Whites became involved in the war, as the Arabs are said to have shown at first no animosity against them. In my reply to the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) on the 28th of February I stated what the action of the Consuls had been. Consul Hawes has a boat; but it has not been thought advisable to keep a steamer at Government expense for his exclusive use. He avails himself, when necessary, of the steamers already on the Lake.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION — SUB-COMMISSIONERS AT NEWRY AND NEWTOWNHAMILTON.

Mr. BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, When the Sub-Commissioners will sit at Newry and Newtownhamilton, to dispose of land cases listed more than six months for those districts?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Land Commissioners inform me it is intended that the Sub-Commission which will sit in the County Tyrone during the month of May shall proceed to and sit in the County Armagh during the month of June?

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I should like to know whether, in view of the pressure in the Land Court, the Government will not consider the propriety of strengthening the Land Commission by the appointment of another Sub-Commissioner?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: The Government are considering the matter.

STATE OF IRELAND—EXTRA POLICE —COUNTY WESTMEATH.

Mr. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to the Charge of Judge Harrison to the Grand Jury of the County Westmeath, in which he said—

> "There were only four cases to go before them. There were none of those ordinary cases of crime that would either point at any conspiracy against the ordinary rules of society or those other matters they had to lament so much in other parts of Ireland. He was told the county was in a perfectly quiet state, and of course they should all feel sincerely glad for that;"

whether there are extra police on duty in the County of Westmeath at the present time; whether the proportion of police stationed in that county is about one to every 237 inhabitants of Westmeath; and, whether, after Mr. Justice Harrison's Charge to the Grand Jury of Westmeath, he will recommend the Lord Lieutenant to now reduce the police force in that county?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I have to reply to the first two paragraphs of the hon. Gentleman's Question in the affirmative. There is at present about one policeman to every 239 inhabitants in Westmeath. The question of the reduction of the extra police force in this county has been recently carefully considered; but the authorities who are responsible for the preservation of peace in that county are unable at present to recommend such a course, as unfortunately it is still necessary to employ a number of police on protection posts and in affording personal protection and protection by patrols.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—SUB-COMMISSION IN ANTRIM.

Captain M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, When the next sitting of the Sub-Commissioners' Court will take place in the County Antrim?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Land Commissioners inform me that a Sub-Commission has been sitting in County Antrim since the 7th of February, and will continue its sittings during the whole of the month of March.

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART — EFFECT OF LIGHT ON WATER-COLOURS.

Sir ALGERNON BORTHWICK (Kensington, S.) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, When it is probable that the long expected Report of the Committee appointed to consider the question of the action of light on water-colours may be delivered; and, whether the experiments of Dr. Russell and Captain Abney have been completed?

The VICE PRESIDENT (Sir William Hart Dyke) (Kent, Dartford): I am informed that the first series of about 700 experiments has been completed by Dr. Russell and Captain Abney. The results which have been collected are now in the press, and will shortly be submitted to the Committee of Artists, who, no doubt, will lose no time in making their Report. This Report, and the results of the scientific inquiry, will be laid on the Table of the House.

POST OFFICE — THE HALFPENNY POSTAGE COMPANY.

Mr. MOWBRAY (Lancashire, Prestwich) asked the Postmaster General, Whether his attention has been drawn to the issue of a prospectus of a Company purporting to supply a 1*d.* postage stamp, envelope, and sheet of note paper for one halfpenny; whether such a proposal is in any way calculated to affect the revenues of the Post Office; and, whether it is in accordance with the Post Office Acts?

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) further asked, Whether the right hon. Gentleman has had ample notice from the inventor on the subject of the Halfpenny Post Scheme; and, whether he has, during the past few days, had brought under his notice an amended envelope which meets the requirements of the Post Office?

Mr. BYRON REED (Bradford, E.) asked, Is it true that letters under the new plan of the Halfpenny Postage Company have for some time passed through the Post Office with embossed as well as adhesive stamps; is it true that the authorities of the Post Office have had samples and particulars of these envelopes in their possession for some time, with notifications of their being about to be used; and, why was no notice taken of these communications until after the Company was formed?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): My attention has been called to the prospectus of the Company referred to. The promoters of the Company came personally to me in the course of last autumn, and I discussed the scheme with them fully. I am not aware that the proposed operations, as described in the prospectus, would directly affect the Public Revenue. The use of the word "Post," however, as part of the title of the Company seems to me to be objectionable; inasmuch as the public might be led thereby to suppose that a post was actually being carried on by the Company, which, of course, would not be the case. The Company has been requested to alter their title by the omission of this word. Letters purporting to be sent under the scheme of the Company have been observed recently to be passing through the post having a 1*d.* postage stamp embossed upon some portion of the paper enclosed. Inasmuch as it is required in the case of letters prepaid by means of an embossed stamp that the stamp shall be upon the outer envelope or cover the letters in question have been treated as contrary to the Regulations of the Post Office. A specimen envelope, which appears to be in accordance with the Regulations, was forwarded to the Post Office for inspection on the 27th ultimo, and the inventor has been informed that such an envelope would be allowed to pass through the post. The envelopes of the Company, when stamped with an embossed stamp, can only be sold by persons licensed to sell stamps by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue.

AFRICA (WEST COAST)—KING JA-JA, OF OPOBO.

Mr. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he will state the circumstances attending the conviction and exiling of King Ja-Ja, of Opobo; whether he will inform the House what offence the King was charged with, and what evidence was brought in support of the charge; and, why the trial took place at Accra, a place 600 miles from Opobo, where the King had no friends and no means of meeting the charges brought against him?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): Rear Admiral Sir William Hunt Grubbe, commanding the West African Squadron, was directed to inquire into the charges against King Ja-Ja, of Opobo. It was proved to the satisfaction of the Admiral that Ja-Ja had incited armed resistance to Her Majesty's Consul when he visited the upper waters in order to open the interior to British trade, so that he was forced back; and that he had broken the conditions of the Protectorate Treaty. The trial took place at Accra, to which place Ja-Ja had been previously removed, and at which his legal adviser resided, according to the discretionary powers conferred upon the Admiral. It was thorough and patient and lasted for three days, at the close of which Ja-Ja's counsel thanked the Admiral for his kindness and impartiality.

MR. W. REDMOND inquired, whether the Marquess of Salisbury had not given an undertaking to the Aborigines' Protection Society that the trial of Ja-Ja should take place at Opobo; and what particular Articles of the Treaty of 1884 Ja-Ja had broken?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON replied that he had been found to have broken Article 5. He was quite sure that the Marquess of Salisbury had not given the undertaking stated.

MR. W. REDMOND asked, if the Government would carefully consider the matter before the sentence was carried out?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON replied that all the circumstances had been carefully inquired into, and it would not be for the public interest for the Government to interfere.

MR. W. REDMOND asked, if it could be shown to the Foreign Office that there was further information, whether they would stay execution of the sentence?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said, anything that the hon. Member or anyone else thought proper to send to the Foreign Office on the subject would be considered. He could not undertake to stay sentence.

CIVIL SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS—CLERKS IN LOCAL PRISONS.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, When it is proposed to give effect to the decisions of the Committee appointed to inquire into the case of the clerks in Local Prisons, and which concluded its labours last summer?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): The Committee have not yet made their final Report. I am informed that the clerks have placed their case before the Royal Commission on Civil Service Establishments. It is unlikely, therefore, that any decision will be arrived at in their case until the views of the Royal Commission are known.

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—SENTENCES OF FLOGGING.

SIR HENRY JAMES (Bury, Lancashire) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If his attention has been called to the sentences under which several successive floggings are to be inflicted upon certain prisoners; and, whether Her Majesty's Government purpose taking any steps, by legislation or otherwise, to prevent sentences of such severity being inflicted?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; my attention has been called to two sentences of flogging recently passed at the Leeds Assizes for offences of robbing with personal violence under an Act of Parliament passed in 1863. Her Majesty's Government have not had under their consideration the expediency of modifying the provisions of that statute. The subject of corporal punishment as part of a criminal sentence is one which, in my opinion, well deserves to be reconsidered as a whole.

LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)—POLICE BARRACK AT MACROOM.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If it is a fact that a new police barrack is in course of construction in the town of Macroom; whether the Chairman of Quarter Sessions at the past two Sessions was presented with a pair of white gloves; and, if he can state the reason for this increase of the police accommodation in the district?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Inspector General of Constabulary replies to the entire of this Question in the negative.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—DELIVERY OF MAILS AT MACROOM.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Postmaster General, Whether any steps have been taken to promote the earlier delivery of the mails in the town of Macroom, and also at Dooniskey and Crookstown, in the County of Cork; and, whether any arrangement has yet been made with the Cork and Macroom

Railway Company for the furtherance of the project?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): There is no train available by which an earlier delivery at Macroom could be effected, and to run a special train for the purpose would not be warranted. The question of improving the service to and from Crookstown is under consideration. There is no post office at Dooniskey; but inquiry will be made whether, in this case also, any improvement is practicable.

Dr. TANNER asked, whether the 2 o'clock train going from Cork to Macroom could not be availed of by the right hon. Gentleman in order to carry the mails from Cork to Macroom, leaving postal bags at the other two stations which were intermediate, this 2 o'clock train being run in connection with the mail which arrived in Cork from Dublin with the English mails about 12 o'clock every day?

Mr. RAIKES: I know the hon. Member takes a great interest in the question; and if he will be kind enough to put in writing what he has suggested I shall consider it further.

ARMY ESTIMATES—BRIGADE DEPOTS.

Colonel EYRE (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he can show, in a separate column in the Army Estimates, the expenditure in connection with Brigade Depôts, and the average number of men of all ranks quartered there?

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. Brodrick) (Surrey, Guildford) (who replied) said: There would be no difficulty in showing the average number of men present at regimental district headquarters; but in such cases of fluctuating numbers it would scarcely be possible to give the expenditure as apart from that of the Service Companies. Probably if my hon. and gallant Friend would explain to me personally what information he really wants I might be able to meet his wishes.

BURMAH (UPPER)—TRADE IN OPIUM AND INTOXICATING DRINKS.

Mr. ATKINSON (Boston) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, If the Government has any intention of promoting or establishing any trade in opium in Upper Burmah; and, if the Government intends to persevere in the effort to legalize, by licence, trade in intoxicating drinks with the Natives or others in Upper Burmah?

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) said, before the hon. Gentleman answered the Question, he wished to repeat a Question which he put on the same subject last week, as to whether he had received information from India with reference to the subject of the liquor and opium traffic in Burmah; and whether he would lay the Returns before the House?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir John Gorst) (Chatham): In July, 1877, I stated, in reply to the hon. Member for Aberdeen, that whatever Regulations for the sale of opium and spirits in Upper Burmah were made, would be for the purpose of restricting their sale in the interests of public order, and of preventing their sale to Burmans, and most certainly not with the view of raising revenue thereby. It is in accordance with this principle that Regulations affecting the sale of opium and spirits in Upper Burmah are now being considered and framed in India. With regard to the Question asked by the hon. Member for Aberdeen, I may say that immediately after his Question in the House last week, I caused a telegram to be sent to India with the view of expediting such Returns; but, of course, I have not as yet received any information or Report. When I do receive such Report, it will be laid on the Table of the House. I may mention that the last mail for India brought some Papers on the subject; and I can assure the hon. Member and the House that the principle laid down by the Secretary of State last year will be adhered to.

ARMY—HONORARY COLONELCIES.

Sir GEORGE TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether appointments are still being made to colonelcies of regiments to which no duties are attached; and, if so, at what date such appointments will cease; how many such appointments are held by officers who have not yet retired from the Service; and, in what part of the Estimates the salaries of those appointments, when held by officers not yet retired from the Service, may be found?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Appointments as honorary colonels of regiments are still conferred as honourable distinctions, and there is no present intention of ceasing to confer them; but they only carry pay in the case of General Officers who did not accept the terms offered in the Royal Warrant of 1881. The paid appointments thus held by officers on the active list are at present eight in number. If unemployed their pay would be included in Vote 18; if employed it would merge in their Staff pay.

FISHERIES CONFERENCE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—THE REPORT.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the President of the Board of Trade, If it is proposed to publish a Report of the Conference held last year between representatives of the various Fishery Boards of Conservators in England upon matters of importance to anglers; and, if so, when it will be issued?

THE PRESIDENT (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.), in reply, said, the Report had been printed and sent to the various Fishery Boards. He did not think it worth while to go to the expense of further publication; but he would supply the hon. Member with a copy if he required it.

LOTTERY ACT—DISTRIBUTION OF PRIZES (ROSSENDALE).

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to an announcement which has been extensively circulated by means of bills throughout the country, and of which the following is a copy:—

> "Newchurch District Working Men's Conservative Association, Rossendale. Grand distribution of prizes. 3rd March, 1888. First prize, a cottage, value £130; 2nd prize, piano, value £30; 3rd prize, gold watch, value £12; 4th prize, bicycle, value £10; 5th prize, wardrobe, value £5; 6th prize, hair seated sofa, value £3; 7th prize, brass-mounted bedstead, value £2; 8th prize, china tea service, value £1 5*s.*; 9th prize, handsome writing-desk, value £1; 10th prize, ornamental fender, value 15*s.*; and a large number of smaller prizes, value £15. A special prize of a gold Albert chain, value £3 3*s.*, will be given to the person selling the largest number of tickets. Tickets, 6*d.* each, sold here;"

and, whether this distribution of prizes is legal; and, if not, whether he will take steps to prevent it?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; I have seen a copy of the bill. I have called the attention of the Director of Public Prosecutions to the case.

ARMY ESTIMATES — EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM—PREMATURE DISCLOSURE.

MR. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether his attention has been called to the fact that his statement in explanation of the Army Estimates appeared in *The Times* newspaper the day before it was delivered to Members of the House, and several hours before it was sent to the Vote Office; and, whether such an occurrence is irregular; and, if not, whether he can explain how it happened, and give any assurance that it will not happen again?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I take upon myself all the blame for any irregularity; but I can hardly tell how it occurred. It was not until I was most positively assured that these Papers would be circulated yesterday morning to all Members that, according to previous precedents, I directed copies to be sent to all the morning papers. The great pressure upon the printers, I presume, prevented a complete circulation of all the Papers, and I have to express my regret to the House for the occurrence.

INDIA—PAY OF WARRANT OFFICERS —DEPRECIATION OF THE RUPEE.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether it is the case that the pay of Warrant Officers of the Indian Department was fixed in 1868 in rupee money at a time when the rupee was worth 2*s.* in English money; and that, since the rupee is now worth only about 1*s.* 5½*d.*, the pay is practically reduced, notwithstanding that the technical and scientific knowledge possessed by these officers have increased in value; and, whether the Indian Government is prepared to reconsider the pay, and, in some measure, to meet the fall in value of the rupee?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): Warrant officers on the Indian Establishment receive special Indian rates of pay which were fixed in 1866, and which are paid in rupees. The Indian Government is not prepared to reconsider the special Indian rates of these or any other officers on the ground of the fall in the gold value of the rupee in countries outside India?

INDIA—LICENSING OF IMMORALITY—WORKING OF THE CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS.

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether he is aware of an official Report, entitled "Thirteenth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year ending 31st December, 1886," signed by "J. Richardson, Surgeon Major, Officiating Sanitary Commissioner for the North West Provinces and Oudh;" whether there is a copy of that Report in the possession of the India Office; whether he is aware that the Report referred to states, with respect to venereal diseases among the troops, that—

> "The present ratio is still higher than the mean of the previous five years, and also than the mean of five years prior to the opening of the lock hospitals;"

whether he is aware that in the Report referred to the medical officer for the cantonment of Bareilly, in order to meet the increase of venereal diseases which has taken place under the operation of the Contagious Diseases Acts system, states that—

> "It is proposed to endeavour to induce a greater number of prostitutes to reside in cantonments, by making their residence there more attractive;"

and continues—

> "Assistance would be given from cantonment funds, which are in a flourishing condition, to enable women to furnish their houses so as to make them convenient both for themselves and for their visitors;"

and, whether he is aware that there are in the Report other similar recommendations?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): No copy of the Report referred to has yet been received.

EGYPT—THE EASTERN SOUDAN.

MR. HOWORTH (Salford, S.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he is in a position to communicate to the House any information about the Eastern Soudan tending to show if the district is becoming more settled, or if trade is again developing there?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): By a despatch just received from Sir Evelyn Baring, it appears that all restrictions upon trade with the interior from the Red Sea Coast have been withdrawn, and Hindoo merchants have already commenced business at some of the ports. A trial caravan was about to be despatched by a Native merchant to Berber. It thus appears that the district is becoming more settled, and trade again developing.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked, whether corn and vegetables were allowed to pass into the Soudan from the South of Egypt?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON replied, that for some time past provisions had been allowed to pass up the Nile. The Question he had answered applied to the Eastern Soudan.

CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES, 1886—ILLEGAL PAYMENTS.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been directed to the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General on Vote 28, Class III., of the Civil Service Estimates of 1886-7; whether the illegal payments therein referred to still continue to be made; who is the officer referred to whose salary and expenses were still continued as private secretary to the Special Commissioner to the South of Ireland, after that office had been abolished; and, is that officer still drawing a salary and allowances; and, if so, in what capacity?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: My attention has been called to the Report referred to. The payments in question continue to be made. The hon. Member is probably aware that the Irish Government took steps in former Sessions to define the position of the Divisional Magistrates by legislation; but were prevented from carrying the measure. They now propose to introduce a Bill dealing with the matter in the course of the present Session. Colonel Turner, the officer referred to, is still drawing a salary and allowances in the capacity of a Divisional Magistrate for the counties of Kerry and Clare.

MR. DILLON: Do I understand the right hon. and gallant Gentleman to say that, in spite of the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General, the Government have for the last 18 months been making an illegal payment, and that they propose to continue to do so, whether the Bill referred to is passed or not?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: I cannot allow it to pass without argument that the payments are illegal. We have had high legal opinion to the contrary. They certainly have been made legal for the past year by the Appropriation Bill.

BURIALS—ALLEGED BURIAL ALIVE AT LEEDS CEMETERY.

MR. HERBERT GLADSTONE (Leeds, W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been drawn to a statement published in *The Leeds Evening Express* of the 29th ultimo and other newspapers, concerning an alleged case of burial alive at the Leeds Cemetery at Woodhouse; and, whether he will inquire into the allegation, which appears to have caused a painful feeling in the locality?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; I have written to the Coroner, calling his attention to this extraordinary statement, and pointing out to him that if there is reasonable ground for supposing the case to be one of premature burial, it is one which would justify an inquest being held.

COAL MINES REGULATION ACT, 1887—HOURS OF WORK OF WOMEN.

MR. CURZON (Lancashire, Southport) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the term of 54 hours per week for which women may be employed in connection with collieries under the terms of "The Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887," includes the intervals allowed for meals, as stated in Clause 7, Sub-section 7, of that Act?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): As I read the Act, the answer to my hon. Friend's Question is in the negative.

In reply to Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck),

MR. MATTHEWS said, that, as he understood it, the 54 hours had nothing to do with the time allowed for meals.

MR. FENWICK asked the right hon. Gentleman, whether he was aware that that would make it 63 hours per week instead of 54?

[No reply.]

SUPPLY—THE NAVY AND CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he was aware that, although this week was now at a close, neither the Navy nor the Civil Service Estimates had yet been laid before the House; whether the period of the production of such Estimates was not much later this year than usual; and, whether the Government expected the House to discuss Estimates of so elaborate a character unless a long interval was given between their publication and their being brought on?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am aware that there has been delay, and I regret it exceedingly. It is due to the fact, I believe, that an attempt is being made to give to the House much more accurate information than has been given hitherto in connection with the Naval Estimates. I think my noble Friend will find that a sufficient interval will elapse after the presentation of the Estimates before the House is asked to vote any money on that account. I will inquire further as to the cause of the delay.

SIR EDWARD REED (Cardiff) said, that if the re-arrangement of these Estimates this year would involve such a large departure from previous years, they would require more than the usual time to consider them before they were taken.

MR. W. H. SMITH said, he had the impression that they would be produced in such a form that there would be no difficulty whatever in the matter of comparison. The difference would be that much more information would be afforded than formerly.

ORDERS OF THE DAY (SUPPLY).

Ordered, That Standing Order No. 20, appointing the Committee of Supply to be the first Order on Fridays, be read, and suspended for this day, and that the Committee of Supply be deferred until after the Order of the Day for resuming the Adjourned Debate on Public Meetings in the Metropolis.—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

PUBLIC MEETINGS IN THE METROPOLIS.—RESOLUTIONS.

[ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Motion [1st March],

> "That, having regard to the importance of preserving and protecting the right of open air public meetings for Her Majesty's subjects in the Metropolis, and with a view to prevent ill-will and disorder, it is desirable that an inquiry should be instituted by a Committee of this House into the conditions subject to which such meetings may be held, and the limits of the right of interference therewith by the Executive Government."—(*Sir Charles Russell.*)

Question again proposed.

Debate *resumed.*

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton), in rising to move, as an Amendment to Sir Charles Russell's Motion, at end, to add—

> "And that, in the opinion of this House, it would insure much greater confidence in the administration of the law if a full and public inquiry were granted into the alleged unlawful assembly in Trafalgar Square on Sunday, November 13, 1887, and the conduct of the police in connection therewith:"

said, that if the Government intended to meet the Motion of his hon. and learned Friend as a Vote of Want of Confidence, there was but little hope for his Amendment. He asked first for an inquiry into the alleged unlawful assembly. It had been contended that the question of unlawful assembly had been concluded by the verdict of the jury against the hon. Member for North-West Lanarkshire (Mr. Cunninghame Graham) and Mr. John Burns. He admitted that there was evidence in the language of Mr. Tims, quoted last night by the Home Secretary, and the words since used by Mr. Burns, on which the jury might well find the verdict they had recorded; but, independent of that, he submitted that there was good ground for the inquiry asked for; in fact, it was absolutely necessary, especially since the high claim had been made for the Executive by the right hon. Gentleman. There was no such general power in the Executive as was claimed not only against the disorderly persons to whom the Home Secretary referred, but against the whole public, and against all meetings, whether lawful or not and whenever held. He quite agreed with the Home Secretary that a threat to force an entrance into the Square was unlawful; but, at the same time, he would suggest that the semi-military occupation of the Square by the Government, which was intended to prevent the exercise of the lawful right of user, was itself calculated to provoke, in the case of ignorant persons, the unlawful acts to which reference had been made by the right hon. Gentleman. He submitted also that wherever there was a claim of right with which the Executive had to deal it was the primary duty of the Executive to submit the claims to the Courts of Law rather than to the adjudication of force. That had hitherto been the policy of each Government in succession, whether Conservative or Liberal, and the course taken by Her Majesty's present Administration had been a lamentable abandonment of the traditions of the Home Office. In this case there was no such occupation as immediately followed the riots in February, 1886; but a notice was issued forbidding all meetings. If the Government had intended to provoke violence they could not have taken means better calculated to effect that object. It was within his own knowledge that the Home Secretary had been applied to in writing by a lady who was assaulted by the police—he meant such an assault as was sufficient to raise the question—for the names and numbers of the constables against whom she might bring an action. Although there was an account of the assault in all the daily papers the Home Secretary had written back that he was unable to ascertain the facts required. [Mr. MATTHEWS dissented.] He spoke after perusing all the correspondence, and did not think his memory betrayed him.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): If the hon. Member has the letters he had better read them.

MR. BRADLAUGH said, that he had not the letters with him, but he dictated the letters to the right hon. Gentleman, and was generally careful in what he dictated, and he read his replies. He would undertake that copies were sent to the right hon. Gentleman tomorrow.

MR. MATTHEWS: I have copies.

MR. BRADLAUGH said, he had no doubt the right hon. Gentleman had copies. He could not be wrong in the case of Mr. Saunders, when the Government had an opportunity of having the legal question decided, but instructed the learned counsel to abandon the prosecution, and at the Old Bailey against Mr. Graham permitted the Attorney General to object to evidence being given for the defendant which should raise the legal question. Both the Home Secretary and the Attorney General ridiculed the notion that there was any point of law at all. The contention was that by statute, whether or not by fact, Trafalgar Square was vested in Her Majesty as private property. The right hon. Gentleman appeared to dissent; but if that was not so there could be no question of private owner or trespass, and the eloquent arguments delivered from the brass box rested on no other legal authority than the brass box. In the case of "The Queen *v.* Inhabitants of East Mark" (11 *Adolphus and Ellis*, p. 877) it was laid down that "dedication might be presumed against the Crown from long acquiescence in public user." In this case there had been acquiescence from the opening of the Square to the present time. That was so apart from the argument that the place was created by Parliament for public occupation and user, that it was in the main part purchased with public moneys, and for a number of years was vested in the parishes which paid for it. The King's Mews, a comparatively small part of the area, was the only portion of the Square which belonged to the Crown. Then the House was told that this habit or custom of assembly in the Square was by sufferance and not by right, and the audacious proposition was laid down that there was no such right known to the law as the right of public meeting. Why, in the case of "Forbes *v.* The Ecclesiastical Commissioners" (*Law Report*, 15 Eq.) it was decided that a right of assembly and recreation on village green was a recognized right and survived even in cases where rights of common had been taken away by statute. That right of meeting in Trafalgar Square he had successfully asserted against the Government after giving them notice that he should resist if he were interfered with. He did not claim that any person was entitled to enforce his rights by physical force. But he was entitled to resist their infringement by such physical force as was at his command; and it had been held over and over again that the mere fact of the trespasser upon his rights happening to be an Official of the Crown, or a constable, did not render the right of resistance less justifiable. It was urged by the Home Secretary that this question had been dealt with by Mr. Justice Charles. He desired to speak with the respect due to a great Judge, but he controverted the proposition of that learned Judge. The learned Judge's charge to the jury was limited by the evidence submitted to him. The Attorney General proceeded there to shut out by objection the whole of his (Mr. Bradlaugh's) evidence, which was read by the hon. and learned Member for Hackney yesterday. He did not blame the Attorney General for doing that—it was his professional duty — but he maintained that the Government, which instructed him, ought to have said that they would allow every real point to be raised irrespective of technical objections, and that they would not handcuff these men in their attempt to struggle in defence of a popular right. He did not question the wisdom of those who conducted the defence, but if he had been one of the defendants he should have sought to remove the case by *certiorari* to the Queen's Bench Division, where such a point might have received authoritative decision after full argument. The Home Secretary last night said that he would present the butcher's bill to the House. Well, it was a butcher's bill. He blamed, not the policemen, but the Government, which, by garrisoning the Square with overwhelming force, by dispersing processions with bludgeons, did that to which England was a stranger, and tried to put itself in rivalry with some of the worst forms of Government. He submitted that he had presented a sufficient case to warrant an inquiry into the circumstances of the alleged unlawful assemblage. He now came to that part of the Amendment which dealt with an investigation into the conduct of the police. For this there was a precedent in the Royal Commission which was appointed in 1855. It was granted without much discussion in that House. Lord Palmerston thought it fair that when grave allegations were made he should not shield the police by saying, "This is a Government question." Some of the charges which were proved before the Commission were so serious that the Government directed the indictment of one of the police officers. Matters had now reached this stage that the Chief Commissioner of Police mistook himself for a sort of *préfet*. He thought himself higher than the magistrates, of whom he was only one, and claimed the right to sit as a *cour de cassation*. When stipendiary magistrates had blamed the police even for perjury, the Chief Commissioner thought it was his right and duty to hold a secret inquiry and acquit the police without examining into the complaints made against them, and also by a public order to rebuke the magistrate who had passed an opinion on the evidence. That was simply a monstrous condition of things. He was astonished at the statement of the right hon. Gentleman last night when he said he was afraid of the police getting out of hand. Now, what kind of stuff were commanders made of when the soldiers got out of hand? The police got out of hand when they knew they had incapable commanders, who one day forbade and another day permitted a thing. He intended to divide his inquiry into the conduct of the police into acts of violence and alleged brutality in dealing with the public on their assembling and on their way to assemble, and into what was much more grave—namely, the assaults by the police upon persons after they were in their custody. The right hon. Gentleman knew that such cases had happened not only in connection with these charges in Trafalgar Square but outside. [Mr. MATTHEWS dissented.] The right hon. Gentleman should not deny this; he surely knew that a case came before the magistrate at Westminster, not in connection with any political meeting at all. It was thus reported in *The St. James's Gazette*—

> "At Westminster Police Court William Rogers, described as a costermonger, and his wife with him, were charged before Mr. Partridge with being drunk and disorderly. When the man appeared in the dock he had two black eyes. He stated that when he was taken into custody there was no injury to his face, and that these black eyes had been inflicted upon him by the constable in the presence of other constables in the police station while the charge was being taken against him."

And that was proved—

> "The inspector, put in the witness-box, said that as the male prisoner stood in the dock the constable let his temper get the upper hand of him and struck the male prisoner as he stood in the dock a blow with his fist in the face."

When was the policeman tried for that? Was that one of the police who had got out of hand a little? There were several other cases not relating at all to any of these meetings in Trafalgar Square or elsewhere in which violence had been used by a constable and in which the magistrate rebuked the constable, and in one case dismissed the prisoner. In those cases there was no sort of order of the day and no inquiry, as far as the public knew. He agreed that there was much force in what the right hon. Gentleman said—namely, that when the police had been kept on duty for long hours day after day, hooted at and hissed, their tempers went. But the responsibility lay on those who sent them where they ought not to be. Did the right hon. Gentleman think that if they were wanted to strike political prisoners, it would not do to be hard with them when they struck others? The English people whom he had known and worked with had always tried to avoid a conflict with the police. They had tried to alter the law. They stood on the right of self-defence against illegal force, a right which the Government should never deprive them of. With respect to violence used by constables against the public, evidence was given upon oath by the hon. Member for Cardiff (Sir Edward Reed) which, if true, showed that brutal violence was used to the hon. Member for North-West Lanark (Mr. Cunninghame Graham) after he was in custody, and he (Mr. Bradlaugh) had seen that that Gentleman's wound was on the back of the head. The evidence was that the police met him half-way and immediately surrounded him; so that there was no need for such a wound. A great many communications had been sent on this subject of police violence, but he would trouble the House with only one or two. Major General Bryne voluntarily wrote—

> "I was in Trafalgar Square on Sunday afternoon when the mounted police kept charging and irritating the people, who were in good humour; and afterwards when the foot police attacked the procession. I can truly say that the doings of the police were a disgrace to a civilized Christian country."

The next evidence he had was that of a man named Meahy—a man in respectable business in Bermondsey—who was one of the marshals of the procession. Having heard that the police intended to stop the processions, he halted his a long way off, and rode up to inquire whether it was true that there were orders to stop the processions. After his inquiry was heard, and there was, therefore, no excuse for violence towards him, he was set upon by the police, and so ill-treated that he had to be taken to Westminster Hospital. If those in charge of the constabulary had intended to provoke a riot they could not have done worse, but probably they had lost their heads. Many other letters had reached him as to the violence of the police in their charges on the people, but he now came to the gravest part of the case—the assaults on men in custody. Every case he should mention he had carefully examined. He would affirm without fear of contradiction that, however vile a criminal, whatever his offence might be, after he was in the custody of the officers of the Crown, it was their duty to guard his personal safety as jealously as they could possibly do. In a letter he had received, a tradesman whom he had long known, and for whose veracity he could absolutely vouch, stated that he was at Bow Street Police Station for the purpose of making some inquiries when some prisoners were brought in. He was prepared to say that he saw the reserve men waiting at the station punch these prisoners with their fists after they were in custody. A man named Fahy, who had been tried and acquitted, was prepared to give evidence, which would render him liable to prosecution if untrue, that at the police station he saw a constable deliberately punch a prisoner named Coleman in the face. Another witness, Ingarfield, could prove that the violence of the police was so great that he had one of his fingers very seriously injured; he would also prove that after he was arrested outside the police station, he received a violent blow on the back of the head. He was corroborated by his brother, F. W. Ingarfield. J. Halpin said that Coleman previously to entering the station had no marks on his face, and another witness, James Crawford, saw Coleman struck in the face in the police station by constable 99 E. Coleman was afterwards brought into Court with two black eyes. The allegation in Coleman's case was specific, and ought to be the subject of judicial inquiry. William Ambrose Rose saw Coleman taken into custody by 99 E, and he had then no black eyes, but when he saw him afterwards both his eyes were blackened, and his head was bleeding. As to the general conduct of the police to prisoners in their custody, a man named Ellis would prove that he asked at Bow Street Police Court whether he could have bail. The idea of bail, he said, seemed to have exasperated the police, who thereupon cuffed and kicked him down the passage into his cell, using a foul expression about the bail. Surely these were sufficiently grave charges and needed investigation? He would only trouble the House with three more cases. John Morris offered this statement—

> "When I got to King Street Police Station there was a line of men in uniform and some in plain clothes on each side. They all kicked and cuffed me cruelly as I passed down. My head and face were cut by them, and bled."

A man named Neil made a statement respecting another called Sullivan:

> "I followed him to Vine Street Station, and whilst he was being taken I saw one of the police strike him on the back of the head with a stick. He was then taken inside the station. I tried to make inquiries about him from the inspector. There was a man in plain clothes inside the station. I was punched on the jaw by him and pushed down the station steps."

This was after Neil had stated that he was a witness for Sullivan. The last case was that of man named Cruickshank, who had been tried and acquitted by a jury, and he would depose that he was taken to King Street Police Station, and that while there he was hit on the back of the head by a police sergeant, Surely the Government would not shelter themselves from an inquiry by professing to regard this Motion as a Vote of Censure. No such attitude was assumed by Lord Palmerston, although he was as likely to defend the authority of the police as any of the present Ministers of the Crown. Lord Palmerston provided legal assistance for the police in the inquiry, and he authorized the Treasury to pay all the legal expenses of the police and of those who prosecuted the case against them. Mr. J. A. Stuart-Wortley, then Recorder of London, conducted the inquiry, and the Report which was issued on the subject brought back the populace of London to absolute confidence in the Government and in Lord Palmerston himself. He knew that with Gentlemen who were pledged to support the Government no entreaty of his would have any effect, but he would ask those who were elected as Liberals—those with whom it had been his pleasure to work, while it was now his misfortune to have to attack—whether they could be so dead to the pleadings of those who had none to plead for them save such an inefficient advocate as himself—he would ask them whether they could refuse this legitimate complaint an opportunity of being tried, the Government having wilfully put every obstacle in the way. Their act in Mr. Saunders' case was a wrongful act after consideration. In the other case the Government might have misunderstood his letter, though he generally endeavoured to make himself clear. He did not know whether he could claim the support of the Front Opposition Bench, to which he was looking very anxiously. He was not making this appeal for Party purposes or from mere opposition to authority. He did not pretend to have been the most obedient man to either one side or the other, but the tradition of his life had been always to encourage respect for the law while it was in force; and where he deemed the law unjust, agitation against it by peaceful and Constitutional means. But if the Government answered by bludgeons he would appeal to hon. Gentlemen not to let them trample upon the weak, who had no other tribunal to which they could appeal. The hon. Gentleman concluded by moving the Amendment which stood in his name.

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the Question, to add the words —"And that, in the opinion of this House, it would ensure much greater confidence in the administration of the Law if a full and public inquiry were granted into the alleged unlawful assembly in Trafalgar Square on Sunday, November 13th, 1887, and the conduct of the Police in connection therewith."—(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): Mr. Speaker, I shall endeavour to condense the observations which I wish to make into the briefest possible time, because it seems to me that one result of the New Rules must be that hon. Members must as far as possible condense their remarks. I make no complaint, I have no right to make any, of the length of the speech of the hon. Member for Northampton, and I am sure he cannot complain of the way in which he was listened to. But I hope the House will allow me to say what will be the consequence if this discussion is allowed to drift from its legitimate subject. The hon. Member has not brought forward one single case which bears upon the subject. I will assume in his favour that some of his cases are within the spirit of his Motion as being connected with the events of the 13th of November. But I assert, and there is no lawyer in the House who will contradict me, that if what the hon. Gentleman asserts has taken place and the names of the parties were brought to the attention of any magistrate sitting on the Bench, there is not one who would not have directed inquiries to be made, and it does not come well from the mouth of a man so fond of posing as the friend of the people that he should have kept back for weeks and months those charges without the slightest intimation of their nature being given to the police authorities, and that he should have brought them forward now for the purpose of attracting sympathy when he knows they will appear in the newspapers tomorrow. I ask, is it fair to air grievances in this House for which the laws of this country afford redress? I should be wasting the time of the House if I were to go into the cases brought forward by the hon. Gentleman. He mentioned 99 E two or three times, who, he alleges, had grossly assaulted somebody in the police station. Why has not the hon. Member written to the Home Secretary or brought the matter before the Chief Commissioner of Police or a magistrate? It is really degrading the House to introduce such matters for the purpose of endeavouring to prejudice the minds of any persons who may be wavering on the main question by suggesting that the Executive Government have been shielding men who had misbehaved themselves. The hon. Member has no right to insinuate charges of this kind against the Executive Government, when nobody knows better than himself that the Executive Government have had nothing to do with the matter, and he has not until a few moments ago brought the cases to their attention. It must not be thought, because in the exercise of my judgment and out of respect to the dignity of the House I do not argue this question of personal assault, that I admit the hon. Gentleman is right when he states that the Executive Government have failed in their duty, or that they have shielded the police. On the contrary, I assert that the hon. Member has made these charges without a shadow of foundation. Upon the main question I should be willing, if I could in fairness, to have left the argument on this matter where it rested after, if he will allow me to say so, the singularly able argument of the Home Secretary. But in all probability if I had done that, two observations would have been made—first, that the Home Secretary had enunciated the law in a way I was unwilling to support; and, secondly, that a direct appeal had been made to me by the hon. and learned Member for Hackney (Sir Charles Russell), and that I did not rise to answer that appeal. It is for that reason that I shall endeavour as briefly as possible to put before the House some considerations which appear to me to bear directly on this matter. I repeat and support every proposition of law which was put forward by the Home Secretary. No doubt sometimes in the course of my observations I shall be favoured with the attention of the hon. and learned Member for Hackney. He made an appeal to me, and as I have to reply to his observations I trust he will do me the favour of listening to me. Nothing which I say of him will be couched in any but terms of the greatest respect. In another place he has been my master, but here we meet on equal terms. Does the House remember that about three weeks or a month ago we were told that there had been a marvellous council, a consultation between the great lawyers on the other side, and if I may quote their names without being out of order I will ask leave to do so. We were told that a joint consultation had taken place between a number of distinguished and learned men, headed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby—[Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT dissented]—and attended by that other able Gentleman (Mr. Asquith) who defended the hon. Member for North-West Lanarkshire (Mr. Cunninghame Graham).

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): The report is not true.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: I am glad to hear the right hon. Gentleman say that it is not true. There are a great many statements made in connection with this matter which are not true. We heard that seven or eight learned Gentlemen were to combine and give a written opinion, which was not going to be made known until the meeting of Parliament. I waited with great anxiety for that opinion, and I am sorry that the very learned Gentleman who is to follow me has not considered the question in a lawyer's point of view. But there was another interesting and amusing thing; the hon. and learned Member for Hackney was not content with his own opinion and research; the Junior Bar had been assisting him in his inquiries. He also told us that he had received assistance from a learned solicitor, Mr. Charles Harrison. He said that he had received information from Mr. Harrison, and he cited Mr. Harrison publicly in this House; but I think it is a little unfortunate that the hon. and learned Member for Hackney instead of taking instructions from somebody else, did not go and examine the matter for himself, for upon the main and particular point upon which he relied, and which was communicated by Mr. Harrison, he was absolutely and totally in the wrong. I will prove this when I come to that part of the argument. Now, let us consider what is the question we are discussing. We were told by the hon. and learned

Member for Hackney this was a serious issue, in which the public claimed the right, according to the custom by which they had exercised it, and the power, to hold meetings in Trafalgar Square. Will the House just consider what is the claim which is put forward—at any time, with any numbers, to go to Trafalgar Square and to congregate there in thousands or ten of thousands, and to block up the adjoining streets as long as is necessary for the purpose of these so-called meetings, on any day, under any circumstances, and whatever may be the inconvenience to the public. Now, I challenge anybody to deny that this is the right which is claimed, and if it were necessary for me to prove my case I could produce that which I had had before me in connection with the trial—namely, the notice by which this right was claimed and by which thousands and tens of thousands were invited to come and support this so-called right. I waited yesterday to see where the great master of the law was going to find authority in law for this great claim. It is no use confusing this with the right of free discussion or any other; we have to consider what is this right for which the hon. and learned Member has been contending. He told the House yesterday that he was not going to deal with the narrow and technical legal pedantry of the question. I wonder whether it occurred to lawyers in this House, when they heard the hon. and learned Member use these words, that when a great lawyer is obliged to disdain the narrow and technical pedantry of the question he is rather doubtful of his law? If he could have shown a legal right it would have been the strongest foundation upon which he could have stood; and I say, with the fullest appreciation of my position, that there is not from beginning to end of the books, one single dictum or judgment justifying or supporting the proposition that in a public thoroughfare or a public place set aside for the people to pass and repass and to enjoy it in the ordinary manner, there is a right of meeting or of coming and occupying that place for the purpose of any public speaking at all. I assert that the books are full of authorities the other way. ["No!"] At any rate, we should be glad to hear from the hon. and learned Member for Hackney any dictum of any distinguished lawyer who had supported this right. The hon. and learned Member quoted, in the first place, Baron Alderson. Baron Alderson spoke of the right of public meeting as being regulated by law and restrained by reason. He did not mean legal regulations laid down by the First Commissioner of Works; he meant regulated and restrained by the law; and I humbly say in this House that Baron Alderson would have been the last man to have suggested when he used the words "regulated by law" he meant that there was a right of public meeting in public thoroughfares. Then the hon. and learned Member quoted from Professor Dicey, but I think it would have been almost as well if the hon. and learned Member had read the whole of the quotation. I dare say he has had to rely, as I have had to do myself, to some extent upon the assistance of others in that respect; but the passage which he read is preceded by these words—"It can hardly be said that our Constitution knows of such a thing as any specific right of public meeting;" and it is after those words that the words follow which were read by the hon. and learned Member to the effect that A, B, C, D, and 1,000 or 10,000 other persons may, as a general rule, meet together in any place where otherwise they each have a right to be for a lawful purpose and in a lawful manner. Does any lawyer in this House pretend that a lawful purpose is to go into a highway and make a speech? Why, it has been decided over and over again by the Courts of this country that a man may not go into a public place and make a speech so as to attract a crowd. It has been decided that a man may not put pictures in his window so as to attract a crowd. It has been decided that a man may not even preach on his private property if people gathered in the street to listen to him. It is an idictable offence so to obstruct a public place. It cannot be suggested that Mr. Dicey when he spoke of "a lawful purpose" and "a lawful manner" meant "an unlawful purpose" and "an unlawful manner." Do hon. Members opposite mean to say that these meetings were held for a legal purpose and in a lawful manner? I have yet to learn that committing an indictable offence was a lawful purpose and acting in a legal manner. No lawyer can cite any authority to the contrary, and I do not suggest that the hon. and learned Member laid down any proposition to the contrary. Identically the same right was raised with regard to the Parks; I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby will deny that there are decisions of Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, Mr. Justice Blackburn, Lord Justice Mellor, and Mr. Justice Quain, none of them men desirous to take away any rights from the people. These learned Judges state distinctly, with regard to the contention that people were by law entitled to do what they liked in the Parks and to make speeches, or anything of the kind, that they were aware of no legal principle and no authority upon which such right rested, and that they were quite confident that there was no enactment which said anything of the sort. I want to know whether the hon. and learned Member relies upon any such supposed right. Let him produce one single text-book writer or Judge who has directly or indirectly recognized such a right. But the direct point has arisen with regard to commons. Nobody will deny that we have a right to walk over commons, and that there are many commons which not only the commoners but the public have the right to use. The question arose in connection with one of the commons near London, where it was urged that meetings had been held for nearly 20 years, and the plea was put forward that because the public had a right to go there, the right of public meeting existed. In trying the case, Mr. Justice Lush and Mr. Justice Manisty decided that such a right was unknown to the law, that it had nothing in the world to do with the rights of passage, and that the fact of meetings having been held did not give any right. But nothing is more irksome to me than merely to rely upon authorities. I appeal to any lawyer, or to any layman who has studied the Constitutional history of this country, and I assert with the very greatest respect, that whereas it has always been recognized that in a lawful place the public have the right to condemn the policy of the Government or to pass any resolution short of sedition, nobody has ever pretended that a place set apart for public purposes could be rightfully occupied for the purpose of making a speech. If that claim can be in any way substantiated, it would be interesting to know whether there was a right of public meeting in the open space between the Athenæum Club and the United Service Club, or in front of the Royal Exchange, or the Thames Embankment, or in Leicester Square, all of which are certainly spaces dedicated to the public. If the right claimed were to be exercised, where would it end? I think that, whereas we ought to be jealous of the right of free speech and free discussion, we are not at liberty and ought not to support under pretence of that free speech that which is not a right but which is claimed by persons who want a greater use of public property where the public are at present able to enjoy themselves. I now pass, however, from that subject, not that I am unwilling at any time to argue it further, but because I have dealt with broad principles. I desire to refer to the particular matter with which I began my speech—namely, this question as it is applicable to Trafalgar Square. The hon. and learned Member for Hackney must have surprised many hon. Members by apparently unearthing two Acts of Parliament, passed respectively in 1813 and 1826, by which he said this place had been made a public place—that is to say, a square for the public, and that the Crown had no right in it prior to the Act of 1844. And when we demurred and intimated that undoubtedly it was Crown property, he said that we were misinformed.

Sir CHARLES RUSSELL: What I said was that the legal estate was vested in the Crown, but that it was public property, being created and paid for at the public expense.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: I was endeavouring to put shortly the hon. and learned Member's objection to our criticism last night. What are the facts? I do not blame the hon. and learned Member. It was a little unfortunate that when he spoke of its forming an open square in front of Charing Cross he left out the words, "forming an open square in the King's Mews in front of Charing Cross." It was a little unfortunate, when he was endeavouring to rebut the express recital of the Act of 1844 the property was vested in the Crown, that he should leave out those words. But that was not all. To the Act of 1813 and the Act of 1826, under which this property was acquired, there was scheduled the form of conveyance under which the property was bought; and I assert that anybody who studies the official documents will find that every scrap of that land which was purchased was purchased by and on behalf of His Majesty. Moreover, there was a remarkable enactment which the hon. and learned Member or those who assisted him had omitted to notice, showing that prior to 1844 no suggestion had been made that there had been any dedication to the public. Somewhere between £300,000 and £400,000 had been spent upon Trafalgar Square, and, so far from that being treated as public moneys for ever, it was provided in the Act of 1829, that whenever the land revenues should revert to the Crown the Crown should repay that £300,000 or £400,000. Yet the hon. and learned Gentleman, in face of that fact, asks the House to believe that prior to 1844 there had been a laying out of Union Square for the public in the sense that it was not a part of the property in possession of Her Majesty. I admit that the question of the legal ownership of the Square has for the purposes of to-day very little to do with this question. But it is our duty, when an hon. and learned Member of so much eminence puts before the House—unintentionally, I am sure—so erroneous a statement of the facts as one that is authoritative and accurate, to supplement and correct the information which he has given to the House. Fortunately for myself I had time to-day to turn up the Acts of Parliament bearing on the matter, and I assert that the whole of that land was purchased on behalf of Her Majesty, and that a clause was inserted providing that the Crown should repay that money so expended in the event of the hereditary revenues of the Crown hereafter reverting to the Crown. In the Act of 1844 there was an express recital that these things are all vested in Her Majesty in virtue of the Crown. Everybody agrees that the Executive Government are not acting on behalf of Her Majesty individually, but that they are acting in protection of public rights and of public property; and, therefore, I do not refer in this debate to the mere question of ownership.

Sir CHARLES RUSSELL (Hackney, S.): The hon. and learned Gentleman had better read the Act. It goes on to say that the space or square has been formed, laid out, embellished, and ornamented at the public expense.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: I have never denied that public money was spent upon Trafalgar Square. I have pointed out that the hon. and learned Member made an undoubted mistake in regard to the Acts of 1813 and 1826. I was not dealing with the Act of 1844, but with the position of things prior to the Act of 1844; and I have admitted in the plainest terms that there had been a public expenditure on the Square prior to 1844, and that it then vested in Her Majesty in virtue of the Crown. I must say that I regret one incident in this debate, and that is that one who has held the position of the first Law Officer of the Crown should have thought fit across the Table of the House to ask the Home Secretary to make a statement in regard to the opinions of the Law Officers of the Crown for a long period of years. I have always understood that the opinions given by the Law Officers of the Crown are confidential documents in the strictest sense of the word; and, knowing as he did that my mouth was closed, I confess I was a little surprised that he should have thought fit to make a suggestion in respect to those documents which he knows perfectly well that neither the Home Secretary nor I could accede to. But I am fortunately able, without breaking confidence, to answer the hon. and learned Member on his own ground. He asserted that Sir George Grey said twice in this House that Trafalgar Square was a lawful place of public meeting. He gave us two instances. The first was in 1848, when Sir George Grey dealt in this House with the matter respecting Mr. Cochrane's meeting. All that Sir George Grey there said was that the meeting was not by its purpose an illegal meeting, but that the place in which it was held was prohibited by the 57th of *Geo.* III., and neither directly nor indirectly did he refer to the question of people being entitled to hold a public meeting in Trafalgar Square. This is most important, and anybody can read for himself from the authorized reports the language which Sir George Grey used. He said—

> "The Commissioners of Police, seeing the advertisement, wrote to Mr. Cochrane, and informed him that there was an Act of Parlia

> ment, the 57th *Geo.* III., the provisions of which prohibited the holding of any meeting in the open air for the purpose of petitioning Parliament. . . . . Mr. Cochrane acknowledged the receipt of the communication in a letter in which he stated that he was not aware the meeting was illegal. The Commissioners, in reply, told him that he mistook their meaning, that it was not an illegal meeting, but that the place appointed for it was within the limits prohibited by an Act of Parliament."

The hon. and learned Member for Hackney is a great lawyer. Will he seriously assert that when a man says it is illegal under one Act, that implies that it is legal without that Act of Parliament? That argument would not do in a Court of Law, and I do not think it will do in the House of Commons. But I say that Sir George Grey was neither directly nor indirectly referring to the right of public meeting in Trafalgar Square. He was referring to a particular statute which prohibited particular meetings. The other instance cited in respect to Sir George Grey occurred in 1866. And when the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh), somewhat parrot-like, repeated the statement that was made by the hon. and learned Member for Hackney—namely, that Sir George Grey was advised by the Law Officers of the Crown that there was a legal right of meeting in Trafalgar Square—we sent for the book and made the hon. Member for Northampton read it last night. Well, I venture to say that there was not a line or a word to justify the statement of the hon. and learned Member for Hackney that Sir George Grey said, either directly or indirectly, that he had been advised by the Law Officers of the Government that there was a legal right to hold a meeting in Trafalgar Square. Let me then assume that we are to deal with this question apart from the alleged admissions of previous Home Secretaries, and let us see how the matter stands. Undoubtedly there have been at times meetings held in Trafalgar Square. There undoubtedly have been times when, without serious interference with the public right, those meetings might be permitted. But I say that under no circumstances have those meetings been permitted in the sense of being allowed because they were claimed as of right. Those meetings have been permitted because the present Government, like previous Governments, did not wish to interfere with that which possibly was an illegal use of the Square, unless it was necessary in the interests of the public service. And I really want to know what the complaint against the Government is. Is it that they did not interfere soon enough or that they ought not to have interfered at all? It has been already demonstrated by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary that if they had not interfered at all they would have been grossly negligent of their duty. I have heard reference made to Mr. Justice Charles, who said that the Executive could well afford to let people say that they had taken too many precautions rather than let the mischief occur from fear of being blamed for interfering. The hon. and learned Member for Hackney made a curious misstatement in regard to my speech. He asserted that I had said there was no evidence that the Government had anything to do with Sir Charles Warren's regulations. I ventured to correct him, and he read my words, which did not support his statement. My words were that there was not a tittle of evidence that Sir Charles Warren had acted upon the suggestion of the Government. The defendant Burns called Sir Charles Warren the creature of the Government; the defendant Burns had suggested that the object of the Government was to prevent free discussion in respect to their own policy. He suggested that the Government had not acted in the interest of public safety. Fortunately for us, and fortunately for justice, Sir Charles Warren was examined on oath, and a summary of his evidence was given by the Home Secretary last night. There are one or two matters in connection with that which I should like to bring under the notice of the House. Sir Charles Warren said he had personally watched those processions, that he had seen them going to Trafalgar Square day by day, and that if they had not been watched by the police there would have been the same danger to the Metropolis as occurred in February, 1886. The excuse given by the hon. and learned Member for Hackney was that the police happened to go to a wrong place, and because of that a serious riot occurred. Supposing the police had gone to the wrong place during the October and November meetings? Sir Charles Warren has stated on oath that, in his opinion, those gangs were a danger to the streets through which they passed. I may mention one circumstance in connection with that subject. The Home Secretary told the House last night that Sir Charles Warren reported to him that the people who assembled were organized, and were able to go in organized bands to Trafalgar Square for the purpose of forming processions in the streets, and that they could assemble 1,000 strong in 10 minutes. I say, therefore, that any Executive, with what Lord Salisbury properly called the object lesson of 1886 before their eyes, in neglecting the warnings of October, 1887, would have been grossly negligent of their duty. Hon. Members would not forget that there was a good deal of connection between the disturbance of 1886 and the defendant Burns, who was one of the defendants on the present occasion. The hon. and learned Gentleman was severe on Sir Charles Warren's regulation of the 8th of November. He asserted on his authority that Section 52 of the Act gave Sir Charles Warren no power to make the regulation, on the ground that it only regulated processions which were likely to obstruct the streets. I do not believe any Judge in the land reading the statute would construe it in that absurd and narrow way. Let us test it. Let us suppose that two processions are organized of 20,000 people, and that they are both converging on the same point. It is suggested that the police are to make regulations whereby a procession is to be broken up and a small number of persons only are to be allowed to pass. It was proved that all those processions were so exactly timed as to come from five or six different avenues into Charing Cross at the same time. What would have happened if those advancing processions had met at the same time? The hon. and learned Gentlemen said that no reasonable man had any doubt that if the processions had been allowed to pass no harm would have happened. [*Opposition cheers.*] Yes, it is easy for hon. Members with no responsibility to say so. It is ridiculous to say that Sir Charles Warren is the creature of the Executive; it is a slander on him. Sir Charles Warren has gone into the witness-box and stated on oath that, in his judgment, there would have been a serious riot if those processions had been allowed to converge. But the House may judge for itself what was the character of those processions. They were organized by the Radical associations, and I agree with the hon. Member for Northampton in believing that, so far as the Radical associations themselves were concerned, they did not wish to see any disorder. I never suggested that at the Central Criminal Court; but what charm have the summoners of a meeting got that they can keep away the roughs and the criminal classes, who have been watched in the Square day by day? The processions took place on the Sunday afternoon. On the Saturday night it came to the knowledge of Mr. Tims, the secretary, somehow or other, that the processions were going to be armed with sticks or weapons. So important did he think this matter that he sent out special messages on Saturday night to the stewards of 26 different places to stop anything like sticks being carried in the procession. But what good was that, seeing that the procession was to consist of 60,000 or 70,000 people? I wish the House to consider this—that if it was true, and I believe it was, that the Radical associations did not wish any disorder in the demonstration, how was it that the invitations to come in their thousands had been so misconstrued? The Radical associations cannot keep away, much as they might wish, the thousands of rough men who are prepared to take advantage of any scrimmage that may occur, or riot which may break out, or any temptation to enrich themselves at the expense of their neighbours. It is a remarkable fact that every one of those processions was accompanied by men armed with sticks, in many cases studded with nails, with gaspipes, and even with knives.

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): How many gaspipes?

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: Does the hon. Gentleman suppose we have succeeded in getting hold of every weapon that was carried? The fact that in a number of cases we have succeeded in being able to capture a number of weapons by no means shows that there were no other weapons carried. To say, therefore, that processions of that character should be allowed to converge upon a particular place with a view of exercising what is called the Constitutional right of public meeting, is a simple abuse of language. A so-called right is to be turned into gross licence and lawlessness. We were twitted by the hon. and learned Gentleman for having declined to raise this question in Mr. Saunders' case. I do wish, that the hon. and learned Gentleman would have studied that case in the Court. The hon. and learned Gentleman had a copy of Mr. Corrie Grant's speech in that case; but why did he not tell us what Mr. Saunders was charged with? Mr. Saunders was arrested for violently obstructing the police, and the magistrate found that he had been guilty of no violent conduct. There were only two things for which Mr. Saunders could have been arrested —using seditious language and holding an illegal meeting. Neither of those charges is punishable on summary conviction, so that it is a fact that the police had improperly arrested Mr. Saunders, and that there was no charge made against him on which this question of right could be raised. There are many hon. Members who know, if they wish to raise the right, how to do it; but it is not fair to suggest that the Government burked an inquiry in the case of Mr. Saunders. I will undertake to say that the question could not have been raised in Mr. Saunders' case in any shape or form. Let any hon. Gentleman who is a lawyer, and who may succeed me in the debate, take up the proceedings, and tell us on what charge this question of right could have been raised. I was also twitted by the hon. Member for Northampton with having objected to evidence in the trial of Messrs. Graham and Burns. The House will remember that the hon. Member for North-West Lanarkshire was defended by another hon. Member of this House—the hon. Member for East Fife (Mr. Asquith). No one who heard the defence of the hon. Gentleman can doubt that his client was most ably defended. But every lawyer knows that if I objected to previous proceedings being gone into, the way in which to raise the question was for the counsel to press the evidence and ask for a point to be reserved. The charges which were being made against the defendants were those of riot and unlawful assembly; and it did not need great experience to know that the conduct of the police had nothing in the world to do with the charge being tried before the jury. Therefore, I took the objection, and the hon. Member did not press the matter. It is asked of us—"How long are you going to keep up this police regulation?" The right and proper answer is that the Executive are the judges. But let the House judge for themselves whether it is right at the present time to maintain the order. The hon. Member for North-West Lanarkshire and Burns were in prison for six weeks. After they got out what did the defendant Burns say with reference to this question of Trafalgar Square? This is what the Executive Government are threatened with—

> "They wanted a rallying cry—something which would galvanize and crystallize their aspirations. They—the French—chose the Bastille, in which some of their fellow-creatures were suffering for daring to oppose the Executive Government. And they whom he now addressed could make Trafalgar Square their revolutionary square and let their Bastille be Pentonville Prison. And when they had captured Trafalgar Square—and he intended to be one of those to do it—let the celebration of the capture of their open-air town hall—their Trafalgar Square revolution—be the demolition of their Bastille—that cursed prison at Pentonville which represented all the vices and the embodiment of all that was bad in the worst possible forms of government and the system of society."

What would this House think of a Government if it should, confronted with a man who is capable of using that language, and who is supposed to be the leader of thousands of persons, at once withdraw the prohibition which the Police Authorities think is necessary for the safety of the public? The hon. and learned Gentleman, by his Motion, asks for an inquiry by a Committee as to limiting the rights of interference by the Executive Government. Does any man suggest that a Committee of this House can take out of the hands of the Executive Government the responsibility of dealing with questions affecting the peace of the Metropolis? Does anybody suggest that a Committee of this House can lay down the circumstances under which you can permit street preaching or public speaking, and the limits within which you ought to stop it? Regulation is suggested. Regulation as to what? As to numbers? Why, how is it possible to lay down regulations as to what numbers may go to Trafalgar Square? Such a regulation would be perfectly absurd and futile.

Or as to the subject of discussion, what regulation can you lay down except that you have a right to discuss in a proper place every subject that falls short of sedition or those matters which are prohibited by law? The result of the matter is this. My hon. and learned Friend started upon this inquiry in the belief that he could condemn the action of the Government in respect of it. It was publicly announced that an Amendment to the Address was going to be moved in this matter. I have the authority of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) for saying that any Amendment to the Address was a Vote of Want of Confidence; and it cannot for a moment be admitted that because the hon. and learned Gentleman has altered the form in which the subject is presented the Government ought to meet him by acquiescing in it, thereby practically admitting that there was a case to which they had no answer. If it is desired to make any Amendment in the law, it ought to be considered carefully. But it is idle to suggest that you can claim an existing right in respect of this particular place higher than you can claim in respect of any other public thoroughfare or public place. Her Majesty's Government have shown that they would support the responsible Authorities when the responsible Authorities felt that in the interests of public safety certain action should be taken. This Motion in effect asserts that Her Majesty's Government were wrong in that course. I ask those who believe in the rights of the people being protected, but who do not believe in spurious rights set up and alleged for the purpose of claiming for particular individuals that which is not enjoyed by their fellow men, to join with us in rejecting this Motion on the ground that we have interfered with no right, public or private, enjoyed by the people, but have merely taken care that the user of public places shall be consistent with the safety of person and property.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General, I think, need not have apologized for not having sufficiently exhausted the treatment of this question. He has treated it quite sufficiently exhaustively and quite sufficiently broadly for this purpose at least—that if his argument is accepted and acted upon as the Government have acted upon it, there is no longer, either in London or elsewhere, any right of public meeting in this country. Now he began his argument by absolutely challenging the right of public meeting. On the other hand, the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) in his speech last night said that—

> "The Government were of opinion that public discontent should find a free and open voice, and should not be driven to express itself in secret conventicles."

I am very glad that there is one Member of the Government, at all events, who holds that opinion, because in justifying the policy of the Government in relation to another part of the country the hon. and learned Attorney General stated that its principal merit was that at all events it had driven discontent into secret. Well, now, to use a celebrated phrase of Sir James Graham, I think we have had enough of *Nisi Prius*, and that with reference to this question we may have a little too much of the Central Criminal Court. I would ask leave, therefore, to look at this question in a little freer and broader atmosphere than that which is found at the Old Bailey. What, then, is the proposition for which the Government contend, and for which the hon. and learned Attorney General has argued? He says, and we admit that there are various conditions upon which alone public meetings can be held. First of all, a meeting must be for a lawful object, which is not disdisputed; and, secondly, it must be in a place where a man has a right to be; and then he proceeds to demonstrate that there is no place where anybody has a right to be for a public meeting. What is the meaning of proving that Trafalgar Square belongs to the Crown? If Trafalgar Square belongs to the Crown in the same right as the Park belongs to the Crown, will you deduce from that the consequence that the Crown has the right to forbid public meetings either in the Park or in Trafalgar Square? This very right was set up in 1866 in reference to the Park, and what was the consequence? Does the right of public meeting exist in the Park or does it not? What is the view of the Government upon that subject?

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: It exists by Statute.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: By Statute! The hon. and learned Attorney General, I am afraid, has not read the Statute, because the Statute does not confer upon the public a right of meeting; it assumes that the right of public meeting exists, and gives the Crown the right to regulate a public meeting there. I think the hon. and learned Attorney General, before he advises the Home Office, and talks of the traditions of the Home Office, had better acquaint himself with the opinions of those who preceded him in relation to this question. Now it is a little too much that the hon. and learned Attorney General should deprecate reference to former legal opinions of the Law Officers of the Crown. For what does the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department do? He comes down here and says —"I act upon the traditions of the Home Office and on the opinions I found there." Now, I undertake to say that the conduct of the Government is in contradiction of every tradition that existed at the Home Office when I was there—and I hope I left it in this matter as I found it—and contrary to every opinion given by the Law Officers to previous Secretaries of State. I assert that with the most absolute confidence. What was the case at Hyde Park? When a claim was made to hold meetings in the Park, just as in Trafalgar Square, the right of the Crown as proprietor of the Park to forbid the public to hold a meeting in the Park was set up. Did the Law Officers of the Crown advise that upon that ground such a meeting could be treated as an unlawful meeting? They certainly did not. The question was put in 1866 to the Law Officers whether, supposing a number of persons who had already entered Hyde Park to form itself into a meeting for the discussion of political subjects, any legal authority to disperse such meeting by force exists, though general notice may have been given that meetings of this description would not be allowed? That was the distinct question put to two as great Law Officers as ever filled the offices of Law Officers of the Crown—Sir Hugh Cairns and Sir John Karslake—and their answer was in substance this—

> "There is not for any practical purpose a legal authority to disperse by force a meeting of the kind supposed consisting of a large number of people, and that whether notice has been given or not."

This is most material, and shows exactly how it was that the right of public meeting in Hyde Park was recognized. There was absolutely no right. It stood absolutely on usage.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: Will the right hon. Gentleman read the beginning of that opinion? He gets it out of *Hansard*.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I have not got *Hansard*, and I did not take it out of *Hansard*. I took it from my own private notes. [Sir CHARLES RUSSELL here handed up a volume to the right hon. Gentleman, who read:—"We think there is a right in point of law to close the gates of the Park."] But my whole argument is that that did not carry with it a right to disperse the meeting as an unlawful assembly. What it carried with it—and that is what these Law Officers pointed out—was the right to bring an action for trespass or proceeding by way of intrusion. That is of the essence of the whole thing. I consider that the whole thing turns upon that. Now, the Government have not taken the course which they might have taken of proceeding against these people for trespass or intrusion on Trafalgar Square, but they have dispersed them as an unlawful meeting by force, and that is what Sir Hugh Cairns and Sir John Karslake said they had no right to do in the case of Hyde Park.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: Will the right hon. Gentleman read the whole opinion?

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: If the hon. and learned Gentleman will point out what he wants read I will read it. Is it not there? [handing the volume across the Table].

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER (after looking at the page): There is an opinion, but not the opinion that the right hon. Gentleman has quoted. The opinion that is quoted in *Hansard* is that of Lord Cockburn, Lord Westbury, and Mr. Wills. The opinion which the right hon. Gentleman has quoted is said to be the opinion of Sir Hugh Cairns and Sir John Karslake, and is taken, I understand, from private notes; that opinion has, as far as I know, never been published.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I do not know why it should not be published as much as other opinions have been published. I want to point out the notorious fact that the Law Officers of the Crown had been advised—you will find it all over the debates of the time—that you could only proceed in this way by trespass or intrusion; and that was clearly the ground on which the Government found it impossible to put down meetings in Hyde Park. I will refer to another thing which the hon. and learned Attorney General will not object to, I think. There was a police order in 1862 in which it was said that—

> "Any one threatening to deliver any speech or address or discuss any popular or exciting topic is to be cautioned that he cannot be allowed to do so, and if he persists he is to be removed out of the Park, and the persons forming the meeting are to be told to depart."

Well, that was the police order which was enforced in Hyde Park, and then, upon the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown, was withdrawn because it could not be enforced. I am bound to make this statement because the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department has chosen to say that the course the Government has taken is in conformity with the former traditions of the Home Office. I heard that with great astonishment, for it is wholly inconsistent with all traditions and with all the opinions that I have seen. The hon. and learned Attorney General has referred to the case of a common. I think that is a good illustration, and I was going to refer to it. People have a right to go on a common to play football and cricket. The hon. and learned Attorney General says they have no legal right. Well, you may proceed against them if you like by an action of trespass, but what good would it do you? What damages would you get? It is because you have not the right of arrest, only to proceed by trespass, that people do play football and cricket on the common. It is the right of user; it is a valuable social right, and I will, in the case of public meetings, call it a political right. You know that the House of Commons has refused to allow the owners of the commons to hut up those commons without providing by absolute allotment—which a lawyer may say is not a legal right at all. But they recognize the rights of user and treat them as substantial rights, although they may be proved in a Court of Law not to be technically legal rights. That was exactly the view taken in the case of Hyde Park. There there was a right of user of public meetings and of general public enjoyment, and Parliament would not allow it to be taken away, and I hope they will not allow it to be taken away in the case of political meetings. You say the ownership is in the Crown. I dare say it is. The ownership in other cases may be in private individuals, and when you have raised that what does it amount to? If the Crown prevented public meetings and private owners prevented them, what would become of public meetings? They would be put an end to by the arguments of the Government and by the policy of the Government. You may go into Scotland; you may go into the county of Sutherland. Nobody has a legal right there, or in the greater part of it, except the Duke of Sutherland. Well, is the hon. and learned Attorney General going to say that no man has a right in Sutherland except the proprietor of the soil? And yet the argument would be just as valid as the argument he has now set up. Why, as regards this argument of his, I could have helped him to authorities even stronger than those which he quoted. He will find one in the Kingston-on-Thames case, where it was an indictable offence. I will quote him the words of Chief Justice Cooke, who said that if players caused an unusual concourse of people to assemble to see them at their tricks, that was an unlawful assembly for which they might be indicted. I have no doubt the hon. and learned Solicitor General is at this moment looking up precedents upon the history of unlawful assemblies in this country. I repudiate arguing this question in that way. The right is there. It is a political right which has belonged for generations to the people of this country, not asserted in the Courts of Law, but of which Parliament may take cognizance and make provision for as in the case of the common. How was the right of public meeting established in Hyde Park? I do not know how soon the

Government will attack that. I will quote from a letter from a gentleman of high political authority at the time. It is from the right hon. Gentleman the senior Member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright). It is a letter dated Rochdale, July 19. He says—

> "Dear Sir,—I thank your council for the invitation to the meeting intended to be held in Hyde Park on Monday next."

That is the meeting the Government had prohibited.

> "I cannot leave home for some days, and cannot be in London on the 23rd instant. I see that the Chief of the Metropolitan Police Force has announced his intention to prevent the holding of the meeting. It appears from this that the people may meet in the Park for every purpose but that which ought to be most important and most dear to them. To meet in the streets is inconvenient."

[*Cheers.*] Oh, yes; but this is to be contradicted. You are cheering too soon.

> "To meet in the streets is inconvenient; to meet in the Park is unlawful. This is the theory of the police authorities of the Metropolis"—

in the opinion of Mr. Bright.

> "You have asserted your right to meet on Primrose Hill and in Trafalgar Square."

He considers the right there as established.

> "I hope after Monday next no one will doubt your right to meet in Hyde Park. If public meeting in the public Parks is denied you, and if millions of intelligent men are denied the franchise, on what foundation does our liberty rest, or is there in the country any liberty but the toleration of the ruling classes?"

Well, now, the toleration of the ruling classes is the condition of the right of public meeting if we believe the hon. and learned Attorney General and the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary. Then the letter ends—

> "This is a serious question, but it is necessary to ask it, and some answer must be given to it.—John Bright."

That is the way in which the right of public meeting was established in Hyde Park. It was denied, challenged by the Government, and yet it was established. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary says that he expresses the view of the Home Office as to Trafalgar Square. He expressed the view of the Home Office as held in former times when he said to a deputation—"I shall not object to any *bonâ fide* public political meeting." That was the view of the Home Office, but he threw that overboard last night, and said he would make us a present of his speech. I, for one, wish he could keep his speech, and not make a present of it. I know what the traditions of the Home Office were, because in 1881 there was a meeting announced to be held in the Square, and I had to consider what should be done. I then had, among other advice, the counsel of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the Bury Division of Lancashire (Sir Henry James) and Sir Farrar Herschell, and what was the advice they gave me and I followed? The meeting then proposed to be held had two objects. The first was to hold a meeting in the Square, and the second was to come down to Westminster. The advice I received was that the meeting in Trafalgar Square was to be permitted, but the people were not to be permitted to come down to the House of Commons. Therefore, I know what the traditions of the Home Office were then, and I know what the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown was at that time. Then, again, during the administration of Sir Richard Cross, in the case of the Dod Street affair, if I remember right, the action then taken by the police was not sustained by the Courts. Some men were then arrested for obstruction, and the Sessions did not maintain the proceedings; and, if I remember right, Sir Richard Cross did not approve of the course that had been pursued, and a different method of proceeding was afterwards adopted. Therefore, I say you have departed altogether from the practice, the principle, and the traditions hitherto acted upon. And what is the defence for your departure? You say there was disorder and that seditious speeches were made. I do not defend that disorder; I do not defend those seditious speeches. They form a very good reason for suppressing the meeting at which they are uttered; but what justification is it for issuing an order against all public meetings at all future times, whether they are disorderly or not? Nothing can be more unstatesmanlike when you have an evil to deal with than to apply a remedy which goes far beyond that evil; and nothing can be more impolitic when you are dealing with the abuse of a right than to attempt to abolish the right itself. Exactly the same thing was attempted by the Metropolitan

Board of Works. When they became proprietors of various open spaces they enacted by-laws which required the sanction of the Secretary of State. One of those by-laws dealt with the subject of public meetings, and so long as they dealt properly with them I could have no objection to the by-law; but the moment I found out that they were dealing with them by stopping them altogether I remonstrated with the Board. I said that London was a place that must have sites at which public meetings could be held, and I insisted on a spot being marked for the purpose on Streatham Common. I know that some people object to open-air meetings altogether. I know that hon. Gentlemen opposite object to them. I do not impute any bad motive to them, but open-air meetings are a sort of pursuit not recognized among them—they are not to their taste. Yet hon. Gentlemen opposite have a good many other pursuits which equally lead to obstruction, and they do not object to it when it arises out of those pursuits. The greater the feeling of effervescence is, the more desirable it is that there should be an escape for it, and to object to a meeting which is turbulent and noisy is to object to that which is a very valuable safety-valve in the State. In London you have plenty of processions and concourses of people which lead to obstruction from time to time. You sometimes have illuminations at night. You have the University boat-race. I myself have experienced great inconvenience in being obliged to send 1,500 policemen to keep the ground at the University boat-race. Then you have balls and parties which create obstruction, and you have the Lord Mayor's show. You have great occasions like the entry of Garibaldi into London, and great obstruction was caused on the auspicious occasion of the Queen's Jubilee. Those were obstructions to which the Government did not object, and yet they said that the streets must be kept clear for all purposes, and no one had the right to use the streets except for ordinary traffic. That was entirely absurd, and opposed to the spirit of the Statute—the spirit in which it has always been acted upon—which was, that there should be regulation and not suppression of such obstruction. There have always been processions to regulate, and the police have always been ready to do it and have done it with success. If you really wanted to try this question of right, why did you not try it? I have never heard a more lame excuse than that made by the hon. and learned Attorney General in Saunders' case. The hon. and learned Gentleman said it was not a case for summary procedure. What has it to do with the case that it is not a matter for summary procedure? I will tell you why you did not proceed against him. It was because you were advised that you could not find him guilty of taking part in an unlawful assembly. It is because you received that advice that you have not proceeded against Saunders, and it is because you have not dared to bring this question of law to a legal issue. Now, Sir, the Government claims a discretionary power. The hon. and learned Attorney General says that a discretion must rest with the Government in this matter. I think this is a very unwise doctrine. It was most unwise, too, for the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary to say that he should be the judge as to whether a meeting was a *boná fide* political meeting or not. I think the Government should have as little discretion as possible in such a matter. So long as a meeting is not held for an unlawful purpose and is conducted in an orderly manner the Government ought to allow it to take place without any consideration of their own opinion. This discretionary power claimed by the Government is a most unwise power to exercise, and I say exactly the same thing with regard to the place of a meeting. I think the only safe principle you can adopt is to allow meetings with lawful objects and conducted in an orderly manner to be held, and to allow them to be held in the place where they have been usually held. That, I think, is the sound and moderate doctrine on the subject of public meeting. That is all we contend for, and that is the practical and common sense view of the matter. My view of the conduct of the Government is not so much that it is illegal—though I do hold that it is illegal to treat as an unlawful assembly that which at the highest can only be called a matter of trespass, and, moreover, a trespass you have yourselves created by prohibiting that which you ought to have allowed—it is not for the illegality of the course they have taken that I blame the Government. I blame them for their lamentable want of common sense. I think they have shown a great want of common sense in restraining, not only the harmful use of Trafalgar Square—and I admit that in November of last year they were quite right in restraining those meetings which produced so much disorder—but why on earth was it necessary to declare for that purpose that there shall be no meetings in Trafalgar Square hereafter? I do not join in any blame of the police. I think it is a very serious thing to blame the police. I do not say that upon sufficient allegation, the course adopted in 1856 should not be taken now, but I took no part in any attack on the police in the matter. But I do blame the Government for employing the police in such a way as to bring them into conflict with the people. That is a very grave evil indeed. You have created by this unnecessary prohibition an unnecessary conflict which you ought to have avoided. You ought to teach the people to regard the police as their friends; but if you employ them to restrict what the people regard as a just public right, then you turn the police from what they have been, and from what they have always won respect as being, a civil force into a body of *gendarmes.* That is the most injurious thing you can do in the cause of law and order. Objection had been taken on the other side of the House that sufficient notice has not been taken of the meaning of my hon. and learned Friend's Resolution. In vindication of my hon. and learned Friend's assertion that Sir George Grey had stated that Trafalgar Square is a lawful place of meeting, I will just read one sentence from Sir George Grey—

> "When the meeting was to be held in Trafalgar Square I stated that as far as I was informed it was a legal meeting; but that any meeting in which language was held calculated to provoke a breach of the peace was an illegal meeting, but that a meeting held for the purpose of discussing Parliamentary reform was not in itself illegal."

That entirely justifies all that my hon. and learned Friend has said on the subject. With reference to this Motion, the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department said, "What does it want to inquire into?" I think it is necessary after the course the Government have taken to inquire where the people of London are to hold open public meetings. You have said they shall not hold them in Trafalgar Square. I should like to have some explicit statement from that Bench as to where they consider public meetings should be held. Quite apart from any question of technical right, that is a very proper matter for the House of Commons. They took into their hands the right of meeting in Hyde Park in 1866. They determined, although it was challenged by the Crown, although notice was given by the Crown that no meeting should be held, that meetings should be held there under regulation. Why should not we deal with Trafalgar Square in 1888 as we dealt with Hyde Park in 1866? In both cases we are challenged by the Crown on the grounds of proprietary right. I will grant you the title is precisely the same as in Hyde Park. Then deal with the case in the same way. That is not taking any responsibility out of the hands of the Government. It is taking the judgment of Parliament as to the places in which public meetings may properly be held. Then you may have unfettered the discretion of the Government as to the regulations to be made. The objection, therefore, that we are improperly hampering the discretion of the Government is unfounded. I think that is a matter of common sense upon which we have a right to insist, and which is the object of this Resolution. I do not see that the Government have any right to take offence at it. It is a proper time to consider how far the present facilities of public meeting are sufficient, and if they are insufficient how they should be provided for and under what conditions. Then, as regards the interference of the Government in the matter. It might well be that the House of Commons would be of opinion that it is not a wise or proper thing for the Advisers of the Crown to set up the proprietary rights of the Crown. That was the opinion expressed by Parliament in respect of Hyde Park in 1866. I doubt whether even this Government would dare to set aside that opinion. Why should not an investigation of that character be conducted by a Committee of the House of Commons? I ask the Government to state before the end of this debate how many places there are in which they think open-air public meetings may be held by the people of London, and how they ought to be held? But as long as we have such speeches as that we have heard from the hon. and learned Attorney General, which goes to the root of the right of public open-air meetings in this Metropolis—whatever course hon. Gentlemen opposite may take—I cannot conceive how any man who professes to belong to the Liberal Party can do otherwise than vote for the Motion of my hon. and learned Friend.

Mr. MURDOCH (Reading) said, he had taken a prominent part in the presentation of a Petition to the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) against the holding of meetings in Trafalgar Square, which was signed by a large number of the inhabitants of the district. The Petition prayed that steps would be taken in future to prevent meetings being held in Trafalgar Square, and that the rights of ratepayers to have free and uninterrupted use of the streets in the district might not be taken from them. It was the result of a meeting entirely of a non-political character, and it was signed, amongst others, by a most prominent supporter of the Leader of the Liberal Party in the borough of the Strand, and he and others of that Party had cordially worked with the Committee, not only in carrying up a Petition to the House, but also in waiting on the Home Secretary. Those whom he now represented had been in every step most careful to avoid mixing anything in the nature of politics with the matter; and he could say that to his Colleagues and himself it was a subject of considerable regret that the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for South Hackney (Sir Charles Russell) should have brought forward at a time when this question was likely to be raised a Motion that could not be considered otherwise than as damaging to the Government. He would not enter at all into the legal aspect of the question; he was no lawyer, and was thankful that he had rarely anything to do with law. But the legal question had been discussed, and in a way which had given much pleasure to laymen, by the most eminent lawyers in the land. He wished to emphasize the fact that the condition of things in regard to Trafalgar Square had altered very materially from what it was a few years ago. In the Petition it was admitted that the meetings had from time to time been held in Trafalgar Square; the Petitioners stated that they were in favour of open-air meetings being held, but they urged that, in the altered condition of circumstances, the holding of meetings in Trafalgar Square had become a positive danger to the community. It was impossible for anyone not to be aware that what took place in 1886 had materially altered the character of the meetings which were held in the Square. Up to that time, although there had been meetings held which had caused traders in the neighbourhood some inconvenience and annoyance, there had never been any meetings at which an outbreak had occurred. But the meeting of 1886 must have brought home to the minds of all who witnessed it that an element had been imported into it which was of considerable danger to the community. The result of that meeting was that not only did considerable inconvenience result, but loss of property; and it became necessary for the Government to bring in a Bill to compensate the sufferers from the riot which occurred. He wished to quote from an article which on the 20th of January appeared in a paper certainly not friendly to those on that side of the House. *The Echo* said there was no room in Trafalgar Square for a great public demonstration; as soon as a gathering became large enough to make any impression it necessarily overflowed every approach and became an obstruction, and that was a fact which could not be brushed aside by any amount of grand eloquence. That was exactly what the Petitioners said, and he pointed out that not only was the Petition he had alluded to, but the resolutions of the meetings also which had taken place with reference to Trafalgar Square, supported by the whole of the Metropolitan Press with the exception of *The Pall Mall Gazette*—they all supported the contention of the people of the district that the time had come when meetings in Trafalgar Square ought no longer to be held. He spoke on behalf of the sufferers by the meetings which had been held, and in laying before the House some few figures showing what the losses had been, he trusted he should be pardoned for entering upon some rather dry particulars. In the first place, he might mention that the figures he should quote were taken from the books of the traders concerned. A well-known upholsterer, not far from Trafalgar Square, during six weeks lost £1,400, and several letters had been addressed to him from ladies, stating that until tranquillity was restored it was impossible that they could visit his shop. Another trader stated that his loss during the same period exceeded £1,100. An optician in the Strand, whose takings had been £400 a-week, said he lost every week at least half that amount. Two silversmiths in the Strand stated that their losses averaged from £200 to £300 a-week. One whose losses amounted to £1,200 also said he had received several telegrams and letters desiring that the plate in his custody should be sent elsewhere for safe-keeping. This showed that there existed a reasonable dread in the neighbourhood of riots taking place and loss being sustained. A well-known firm in Regent Street, whose name he was not at liberty to mention, told him that in their business, which had up to the time of the meetings gone on steadily, a decline set in. The receipts of a jeweller in the neighbourhood of the Grand Hotel fell off by one-half. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, which had premises in Northumberland Avenue, had lost during six weeks at least one-half of their average takings; and, upon inquiry of the Manager, I was informed that the principal custom resulted from ladies, many of whom had written to him saying that they were in terror of coming into the neighbourhood of Trafalgar Square in consequence of the disturbances which had taken place. He also desired to call attention to the loss which some picture galleries in the neighbourhood had sustained; the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, who were holding an exhibition at the time, stated that their receipts had fallen to one-third; and the Photographic Society, who were holding an Exhibition, were compelled to close their doors in consequence of the falling off of receipts. He could mention many losses sustained by the smaller class of traders in the neighbourhood, and it was that class who were, perhaps, the greatest sufferers, because their margin of profit was not so great. Again, the Grand Hotel had 1,000 visitors in six weeks less than usual, and the falling off at the Métropole was about the same, while there was also a large decrease in the number of visitors to the Victoria Hotel. Another well-known hotel lost nearly half of its customers, and the manager stated that a family came to the door just as one of the meetings was being held and left immediately to go elsewhere. The proprietor of another hotel had received letters stating that it was impossible to bring ladies to the hotel, as they could not be sure of being able to do their shopping. At least one-half less people went during the six weeks to the Charing Cross Hotel, and the manager informed him that he had received letters from the Continent saying that until matters were more tranquil the writers could not come to London; and it was also a noticeable fact that at the time the custom at the hotel at Folkestone fell off. There was no doubt that many Americans, who intended to visit England and who were in the habit of taking London and Folkestone on their way to the Continent, diverted their journey and went direct.

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) asked if this was after the 13th of November?

MR. MURDOCH said, it was between the 13th of November and the first or second week of December; and here he wished to contradict a statement which appeared in *The Pall Mall Gazette* to the effect that it was untrue that the hotels were half empty. It said that a gentleman asked whether he could have a room at Morley's Hotel and was refused. It was perfectly true that a person did inquire at Morley's Hotel for a room; but as he came there without luggage he was refused, according to the invariable custom. For these reasons, he (Mr. Murdoch) said it was high time that steps should be taken to put an end to meetings in Trafalgar Square, which had been nothing less than a national disgrace. He wished to point out that this was in a great measure a working-man's question; because in the hotels contained in the district there were employed 1,350 persons, and, besides that, in connection with them there was standing employment given to artizans of various classes, and those men knew full well that when these meetings took place the custom of the hotels was interfered with and that a great part of their standing labour would be taken from them. As he had said, the character of the meetings had so materially altered that it was no longer possible that they could be with safety continued. He admitted that those who convened them took what steps they could to prevent disorder and violence, and he would go further and say that those who organized the processions did the same; but he said also that no leaders of the meetings or organizers of the processions could prevent their being attended by disorderly characters, and roughs well-known to the police, who went with the sole aim and purpose of taking advantage of any disturbance that might arise. It was the presence of such people as these that made meetings dangerous. Trafalgar Square, he pointed out, was not a large space; it was not so large as Russell Square, Lincoln's Inn Felds, and one or two other squares in London; and however suitable it might have been in the days when small meetings were held in it, it was, under present circumstances, quite unfit for the purpose. Therefore, those on whose behalf he spoke called upon the Government to do in perpetuity what they had done during the last few months, and prevent any meetings taking place in the Square. It was utterly impossible for the Government to discriminate between those meetings which could be safely held in Trafalgar Square, and those which should be prohibited; it was also very difficult for them to judge whether a meeting would or would not cause disorder. There was an instance of that in the riot which occurred in 1886. The authorities then took precautions; but they did not believe there was likely to be any serious disturbance; but there was, and that disturbance in itself ought to prove that meetings could no longer be held in the Square without fear that disorder and riot would ensue, and therefore he called on Her Majesty's Government, who, he was sure, would have the support of the House, to be firm in this matter, and continue in the course which they had already inaugurated.

Mr. FIRTH (Dundee) said, it was somewhat astonishing to him that Her Majesty's Government did not see their way to accept the simple proposal contained in the Resolution submitted by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for South Hackney (Sir Charles Russell). The Resolution contained nothing which amounted to a censure on Her Majesty's Government; it only asked for an inquiry by a Committee of the House into the conditions on which public meetings might be held in the Metropolis. He understood them to say, in reply, that those conditions were so well known that it was quite unnecessary to appoint a Committee of Inquiry; but the course of the debate had shown that even to men qualified to speak of it, the law on the subject was not so clear that a Committee ought not to be appointed to inquire into it. If the Commissioners of Police, as formerly, had a legal adviser, these difficulties would never have arisen with regard to Trafalgar Square, because when they had a legal adviser they themselves arranged for the holding of a meeting there. They put then a construction on the 52nd Section of the Police Act which many considered to be the true construction. It was not long since he had read similar provisions in the Police Regulations of San Francisco, in which the words "except in case of public meetings" occurred, and there was also a special clause regulating processions. Notwithstanding the argument of the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. Burdett-Coutts), it still appeared open to some doubt whether the law was so absolutely clear as to be beyond dispute. If the law were so clear, he asked how it was that it was found necessary for the Chief Commissioner of Police, for whose conduct the Home Secretary was answerable, to issue two proclamations? If the law were clear, the first proclamation would have been sufficient; and, therefore, the proposal made here was fair in itself, and cast no slur upon the conduct of Her Majesty's Government. How could it be a censure on the Administration to ask that the rights of public meeting should be limited and defined? If the people had no right of meeting in Trafalgar Square, then it ought to be known; but he protested against the question being shelved and text books being thrown at the heads of hon. Members who supported the Motion for inquiry. It was Lord Brougham who said that if an Act of Parliament were passed to prohibit the right of public meeting, it would, no doubt, be effective for the purpose, but it would be grossly unconstitutional;

and he said that the history of the Constitution showed how readily the rights of the people might be trampled upon, and that the people never could be safe without a constant determination to resist in every way as long as their rights were assailed. That was exactly the principle which actuated the men who led the processions of the 13th November. They had heard a good deal about preceding meetings, and something from the last speaker with respect to the unemployed; but there was no comparison between the two meetings. With regard to the unemployed, their meetings were allowed to be held; and the Chief Commissioner of Works had said that he had neither the will nor the power to interfere with them. In the proclamation of the 8th of November the First Commissioner of Police excepted the case of the Lord Mayor's Show. What was the object lesson he was thus placing before the people of London? The whole traffic of the Strand was to be broken up for hours and hours, without the slightest excuse, for the benefit of men who, according to a recent Royal Commission, misappropriated many thousand pounds a-year—[*Cries of* "Oh!"]—or appropriated it in a manner different from that which they recommended—and which money would have given assistance to the unemployed. There was no need now that the Law Courts were removed from Westminster for the Lord Mayor's Show to go beyond TempleBar; and the Police Commissioner, by making this reservation, had given a lesson to the people of London which they would not lose sight of. He regretted to hear it stated that the people had only a right in Trafalgar Square by the sufferance of the Crown. He thought it was a great mistake to bring the personal will of the Sovereign into a controversy such as this, which affected the wishes of millions of people. Everyone knew the story of the Minister who, when asked by the King how much it would cost to fence round St. James's Park, replied—"Only a Crown, Your Majesty!" The proclamation of the First Commissioner of Police was issued late in the day on November 12; and on the 13th of November he arranged his forces just as if he was going to meet an impi of Zulus, instead of English citizens, and stopped the processions. There was a *bonâ fide* intention to hold a *bonâ fide* meeting on the 13th November, as had been before announced, to express an interest in the case of Mr. O'Brien. There was a large number of the artizan class who did not, after the proclamation, care to go to Trafalgar Square; but, on the other hand, there was a large number who did, and there were in the procession some men who belonged to the best artizan clubs in London. The whole of the Police Force of London was but as the finger of a man for the defence of order as compared with the influence of those men. They brought no gas-pipes or oyster knives with them, and if the proclamation had not been issued there was no chance of difficulty or danger even to a child; but the effect of the proclamation was to gather two classes of men—one which had no feeling of sympathy with the object of the meeting at all, and wanted to see what would turn up; and another which came to see whether they could benefit themselves to the disadvantage of others. These men who had always been kept in order by the *bonâ fide* portion of the processionists, were brought to Trafalgar Square by the proclamation of the First Commissioner. The police had broken the heads of a great many men, and brutally ill-treated those who went to the Square for a purpose which they thought right. They had not gone to anything like the extent which Lord Brougham had spoken of in asserting their right to approach and enter the Square. The effect of the action of the police had been to do away with the strong support which this large class of the people had given to order in the Metropolis. Therefore, he thought Her Majesty's Government ought to inquire into the action of the police, as proposed in the Amendment, and also to institute an inquiry into the law affecting the right of public meeting. At any rate the matter would have to be seriously considered. He had said nothing in derogation of the members of the Police Force; but there was in it a certain proportion of men who were not men of a high class—men who took advantage of opportunities of this kind, and found in them a reason for putting in operation some of the violence of their nature. That was an opinion that was held by a large number of people. Now, whatever the Government were going to do with this Resolution, what were they going to do in order to bring back the people of London to the support of the forces that were necessary if order were to be preserved in the capital? They knew perfectly well how enormous and dangerous were the forces of the people if they were properly organized. They had divorced the class of trained artizans who argued in public halls with their friends and others as to the desirability of Constitutional action—they had divorced these men from the anxiety to help on the cause of order. They had not made these men disorderly, but had divorced them from sympathy with the authorities. And what were they going to do? He took it that they could not very well leave the present state of things unaltered. At one of the City banquets, where eminent men were accustomed to enjoy themselves, Sir Charles Warren had had the insolence to compare the men who joined in these processions with the class whom he termed "loafers," and whom he said existed in ancient Rome. Between the First Commissioner of Police and these men, on whose support he ought to rely, according to the Common Law, and on whom he was entitled to rely, the divorce in sentiment and opinion was absolute. This he said with very great regret. The Government ought, or might usefully, if they wished to re-establish a good state of feeling in London, grant the inquiry. If they would not, at any rate they might promote the Chief Commissioner of Police. He thought that that was a thing which was almost necessary to be done. There were some people who thought that the Government had entered upon a down grade policy, of which they had seen the full force in Ireland, of which the first step was to break the heads of the people, and the second step, the tracking of men by detectives, for every one of the delegates sent to Ireland by the English working men had been followed by police spies. He greatly regretted that the Government had not seen their way to accept the Resolution proposed by his hon. and learned Friend (Sir Charles Russell).

Mr. WHITMORE (Chelsea) said, that the hon. and learned Member for Dundee (Mr. Firth) affirmed that he spoke with some knowledge of London; but, he was in no manner a Representative of London opinion. In 1885 the hon. and learned Member sought a seat in North-West London, in a district he had long represented; but he was beaten ingloriously there. In 1886 he tried to obtain a seat for a South London constituency, but failed there also; and now any right he might have to represent the opinion of Londoners was derived from the fact that he was the accepted Representative of a constituency in the North of Scotland.

Mr. FIRTH asked, if it was in order for the hon. and learned Member to put Dundee in the North of Scotland?

Mr. WHITMORE said, he spoke as the one who had the honour to represent a portion of that borough which the hon. and learned Member for Dundee once sat for and worked so well and ably for five years. He ventured as a Member for that borough to give his hearty support to Her Majesty's Government in the course they were now pursuing. The Amendment was moved with one of two objects. Either it was put to the House with an ingenious curiosity to ascertain a point of law, in which case either that point of law was a very clear one, as was contended by the Government, or it was one of singular complexity and great difficulty, in which case surely a Select Committee of this House was about the last tribunal in the world which ought to be asked to settle it? It would be in the recollection of the House that when Committees were deliberating upon all those difficult questions which arose in the last Parliament from the attempt of the junior Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) to take his seat, on each occasion with one single exception, that of Mr. Hopwood, every single legal Member of those Committees always found that his view on each point of law exactly coincided with the view taken by his own Party Whips at the particular moment. So it would be again. Or, if the Motion was not put forward with that purpose, it was put forward as a plausible Motion through which to pass a Vote of Censure on Her Majesty's Government for what they did in November. In that case he should, with the greatest cordiality, give his vote against the Amendment. But whilst he did so, he protested that he was not in the least any less in favour of the right of public meeting or free speech than any one of the hon. Gentlemen who sat opposite. But very likely, in some ways, his view of what constituted a genuine public meeting differed from the view of some of those hon. Gentlemen. He could not believe that in a place like London public meetings ought to be held, if he might use the words, *semper ubique, et ab omnibus.* He said that, though he knew that the life of the hon. Member for Shoreditch (Professor Stuart) was one long public meeting. There were hon. Members in the House and gentlemen outside who had other business and other occupations, and he believed that in regard to public meetings the Executive ought to try while preserving that right, not unnecessarily to interfere with the ordinary business habits and quiet avocations of other people. Then again, he maintained that a public meeting was useful just in proportion as it was orderly, and as the speakers were audible. It lost its value just in proportion as it was made a pretext for demonstrations of mob numbers or in any way made an excuse for the terrorism of those who did not happen to agree with the objects in view. Could anyone doubt that the series of public meetings, so called, held in Trafalgar Square, in October last was a series of bastard public meetings in which all the best attributes of real public meeting and of genuine free speech were conspicuous by their absence, but in which every one of the worst features that could characterize tumultuous assemblies was conspicuous by its presence? The hon. Member for Northampton had said that the Government had visited the sins of one political meeting upon a succeeding meeting. He (Mr. Whitmore) asserted, on the contrary, that in that series of public meetings there was an hereditary continuity of evil doing, and that it was perfectly impossible to separate the disorder which had become chronic in that district from any meeting. There had grown up a local spirit of turbulence. It had become the fashion for all that was turbulent, all that was criminal, and all that was dangerous in London to congregate in Trafalgar Square, and thence to disperse themselves through the adjacent streets with the view of terrorising the peaceful inhabitants of the West of London. They had heard that the numbers were increasing, that they were becoming more organized, and that they were beginning to be able to perform certain elementary manœuvres. Therefore, it seemed to him that it was plainly the bounden duty of any Executive Government to interfere. He must say that if the Government were blameworthy in any degree, it was because they hesitated so long. He said that most deliberately. At the same time, he thought there was this to be said—that the Government considered it well to wait until the evil was patent to all men; until it was quite plain that the effect of these so-called public meetings was to terrorise and intimidate and destroy the business of peaceful citizens. It was well to keep on the side of Government an overwhelming mass of public opinion, and that the Government did do. He did not intend to argue the legal question, but he maintained that if an Executive Government had not an inherent right when it thought that a public meeting would cause disorder, a breach of the peace, and a disturbance to peaceful citizens, to prevent and proscribe that meeting before the harm was done, the whole reason and cause of the existence of a Government was lost. He quite admitted that that was a tremendous power for any Executive Government to have. He quite admitted it must be exercised with the utmost prudence and the utmost discretion; but, after all, the public had always got a safeguard that the power would be exercised prudently, because the exercise of it was subject to the approval or disapproval of this House. They, as individual Members of the House, knew that their votes would be criticized by their constituents. He, with the clearest conscience and the lightest of hearts, was inclined to support the action of Her Majesty's Government. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) pointing out how necessary it was there should be places for open air public meetings in London, said the population of London was equal to the population of Scotland. Exactly: it was on that very account that the question of how they were with safety to hold public meetings was surrounded with so many difficulties. What sane man would propose that the whole people of Scotland should congregate in one central square in Edinburgh? It was the very size of London which made this question one of such magnitude and importance. He would suggest that all of them who really were anxious to maintain in its integrity the right of public meeting should try to localize public meetings—that whenever a fresh open space was dedicated to the public they should take care that some part of it was preserved for public meetings; that they should take care that in every district in London there was some open air space in which public meetings might be held. He asserted that as a matter of physical fact it was impossible that the whole manhood of London could be expected to congregate in Trafalgar Square, and to proceed in procession through the adjacent thoroughfares without creating a dislocation of the traffic and a disturbance of business which must be injurious to the best interests of the community as a whole. He should be very sorry indeed if any hon. Gentleman opposite thought that because he supported Her Majesty's Government on this occasion he was not just as anxious as any one of them to preserve unimpaired the right of public meeting in the open air in London. He joined with hon. Gentlemen opposite in the hope that on some future day a representative body of Londoners might be able to draw up rules under which public meetings might be held in London. He was not in the least an old-fashioned Tory. He was quite convinced that they must in London have a central representative body. He should be glad indeed if the odium now placed on the central Government of having to deal with these questions and of having to meet all kinds of unnecessarily factious and frivolous opposition were removed. He should be very glad if that heavy responsibility of deciding under what conditions public meetings should be held in the Metropolis were shifted from the shoulders of the Executive Government and placed in the hands of a body directly representing the people of London. He did not believe that if this was done there would be any less security for the public peace than existed at this moment; he was certain that such a representative body acting in the interest of the whole community would see that the right of public meeting did not degenerate into a nuisance. But in the meanwhile, and until that day came, it was the plain duty of the Executive Government to keep the right unimpaired, and, at the same time, do all they could to strengthen it by reconciling the exercise of it with the ordinary avocations, the private rights, and the business interests of the great mass of the people of this huge town.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) said, the Government had taken a course which was at once strong, strange, and unusual. They had refused to grant an inquiry at the request of the late Attorney General (Sir Charles Russell), and had laid down that there was no *primâ facie* case for investigation, although they had against them the authoritative opinion of his hon. and learned Friend, and of a lawyer whose reputation was universally acknowledged, Sir Horace Davey. The hon. and learned Member for Chelsea (Mr. Whitmore) had doubted whether a Select Committee was a proper tribunal to decide questions of this kind; but it seemed to him that where they had a case of authority against authority, of opinion against opinion, it was most requisite to get a decision one way or the other. They wanted a practical and general decision, not a legal and technical one. He had far more trust in the fair-mindedness and in the rationality of hon. Members when sitting Upstairs than he had when they were in the atmosphere of the Division Lobby; and he was perfectly certain the hon. and learned Gentleman who moved the Resolution desired nothing more than that the question should be submitted to a Select Committee appointed by the House, and reflecting each Party in due proportion. The hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Whitmore) had reminded the House that London suffered from the absence of any central body, capable of deciding these matters which, of course, it should be able to decide for itself. He (Mr. Lawson) was aware of that. Everybody knew that London suffered immensely in pocket and immensely in character from the want of those local powers and that local organization which the Government were prepared to deny them. He wanted to know whether the Government did not feel their responsibility, when they had at their back 48 out of the 59 Representatives of the Metropolis, to give some satisfaction at least to what had been very truly said was a widespread desire that there should be an inquiry, as asked, either on the original Motion or on the Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh). They had heard from the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Whitmore) some strange doctrines with regard to the right of public meeting. The hon. and learned Gentleman professed to uphold the right just as much as any one in the House; but it seemed he would limit it, and make it suit the convenience and purpose of those who had business avocations. It was a strange thing that mass meetings of London working men, who had from time to time been accustomed to express their opinions in public, should cease in order to suit the convenience of any hon. Member, who, like the hon. and learned Gentleman, had other occupations to hand. They had heard a great deal of these meetings being held to terrorize, but the meetings were held under conditions over which the Government had control. At these meetings wild and wicked language was used, and this had been alluded to in order to divert the attention of hon. Members from the real question at issue. He agreed with the hon. Gentleman the Member for Reading (Mr. Murdoch) that the Government might well have done something in the case of the bogus meetings which were not *bonâ fide* meetings in any sense of the word. But the Government took no action whatever, and the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Whitmore) had said they were censured because they did not. The Government might and ought to have prosecuted the men who used inflammatory and violent language for sedition. It was no excuse whatever to say that the men were not worth powder and shot; it was just as necessary that the men should be prosecuted as if they had been men of more note. The Government were induced to take the step of proclaiming all political meetings in Trafalgar Square. The common sense view of the matter was that the Government should, in the usual manner, have taken some notice of the previous meetings which often led, according to the hon. Member for Reading (Mr. Murdoch), to the suspension of the traffic of the world and the intercourse with the Continent of Europe. No one suggested that seditious language ought to be used in any place; no one suggested that sedition ought to be treated otherwise than by prosecution. According to the opinion of some Members, the Government had grossly neglected its duty in not taking notice of the language when it was used, and in not dealing with the meetings as seditious meetings had been dealt with before. One other point had been raised in the course of the debate. It had been said that most of the men who attended the great mass meeting on the 13th of November, had the original intention of coming armed with sticks and bars of iron. He should like to remind the House that if the notice which was sent out by the Secretary of the Metropolitan Radical Federation was late, it was because the meeting was only proclaimed the night before, and he had no previous warning that the Government intended to pursue the course of action they afterwards took. It seemed to him (Mr. Lawson) that they might, to a certain extent, consider this from the point of view that was urged by the Home Secretary last night; they might well look upon it as, to a certain extent, a police question. He believed it was most important that the Government and the House should realize that there was a growing danger to social order in London in the friction and the exasperation which was arising between the public and the police of which the Trafalgar Square meeting and the matters which led up to it, in which hon. Members opposite admitted there was a good deal of shuffling and blundering, was but one example. Owing to the autocratic action, and owing to the military organization of the police force, it was very probable that there would cease to be that sympathy and co-operation with the agents and guardians of the law on the part of the populace, which he agreed with the hon. and learned Member for Dundee (Mr. Firth) had been one of the healthiest and happiest influences in the social condition of this city. They all knew what the cause of that was. The great cause was the want of local feeling and local sympathy, the absence of municipal management and civic control. What they wanted in London was local authority, and it was from the want of it that they were suffering so much at the present time.

Allusion had been made to other boroughs. Everyone knew that in the boroughs and municipalities of England outside the Metropolitan area, the police were controlled by local authority, and that the local feeling which existed between the police and the public, the Chief Constable and the Watch Committee, had led to the happiest results. The two exceptions where there was no local responsibility for social order were London and Ireland, and in London they had the additional disadvantage and additional provocation of being able to contrast their own condition outside the City with the state of things which existed in the City itself. It was admitted so long back as 1837 when the Commission to inquire into local governments and municipal corporations was appointed, that there was no middle course in the establishment of an efficient police. The Commission seemed to lean to the side of entrusting Local Authorities with the entire command of the police, which they believed would be most valuable in its results. No one could have lived long in this city without noticing that there was a much better feeling between the City Police and the police outside the city boundaries. There was sympathy between the police in the city and the people, and the police there acted in the spirit of public responsibility. He did not intend to enter this evening into the whole question of the loss that accrued to this city, the large loss, from the want of local control and local management, but merely wished to point out that in this city they paid a very large tax in the difference between the price paid in the Metropolis for the police and the price paid outside. The whole of the general organization of the Metropolitan Police Force was in the hands of a clerk sitting in a back office of the Home Secretary's Department, whose very name was unknown to the public and the Governing Bodies with whom he had to deal; yet this man was the ruler in many of these most important matters. This was not the first time that hon. Members and the local bodies of London had asked there should be in this matter that local connection and local control which he believed they prized above all things. In 1869, when Colonel Henderson was appointed the Chief Commissioner, there was exactly the same outcry, and at that time a deputation presented a memorial to the Home Secretary on behalf of the vestries and District Boards, pointing out that in London, as elsewhere, there should be a popular representative Board, or a Watch Committee, with the control and management of the police. They complained, then, that the police was a *quasi* military force, drilled and managed as soldiers. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) had pointed out the fact that on the day in question, Trafalgar Square was occupied virtually in a military manner. In the memorial which was presented to the Home Secretary in 1869, complaint was made that the police were not confined to strictly police duty. It seemed to him that though a great deal was done by Colonel Henderson in his time to remedy the state of things complained of, there was now a deliberate attempt to drive the police force back into a military and anti-popular groove, both as regarded work and discipline. The original intention when the force was founded 60 years ago was that at the head of the force there should be two men, one a lawyer and one a military man. He believed that after Colonel Round's death there were two military men associated with Sir Richard Mayne who represented the civil element. Now, the civil element was conspicuous by its absence, owing to the wrong-headed recommendation made by the Police Reorganization Committee in 1886, in a panic after the riots which then took place. There were appointed in the place of the old District Superintendents new Chief Constables, and these Chief Constables were in every instance men on the active list of the Army. They were men who had received their training in most instances, he fancied in the far East, in our Indian possessions or in South Africa, where they were hardly likely to have acquired that delicate touch and appreciation which enabled them to deal with the wants of the London population. The numbers of the force were being yearly increased, but if the authorities went much further in militarizing the force, the numbers would have to be doubled. The contact and intercourse between the police and their fellow citizens was being gradually done away with. In the first place, new conditions had been introduced into the manner in which men were enlisted in the force. There was a growing disinclination to take married men, and the unmarried men were all put in barracks. When married men were taken, they were told they were taken on condition that they accepted lodgings in barracks, lodgings which were offered to them at a smaller rent per week than they could get them at in the surrounding neighbourhood. The men themselves were not very well satisfied. Hon. Gentlemen representing Metropolitan constituencies constantly received letters from the men complaining of the manner in which they were treated with regard to promotion and other matters. There was indeed very great dissatisfaction in the Force, as might well be expected in consequence of what had been going on lately. But even more serious than that was the alienation of the police from the Local Authorities. The methods which used to prevail had come to an end. He was told by skilled and competent administrators that formerly they were in the habit of going to the police in small matters, and that the local requests were treated in a manner which was satisfactory to all parties. At the present time men who went on this sort of errands were met with black looks and rigid rules; their requests were referred to Scotland Yard, and they had to put up with the worst of all red tape, the red tape of the military administration. Then, the most important point of all was the refusal of the police to perform the usual duties for the maintenance of public morality. As the House knew, there had been a good deal of correspondence going on in respect to this matter; and that the other day, when a deputation, representing 20 Vestries, waited upon the Home Secretary, the right hon. Gentleman laid down the law in a way certainly not carried out. It was rather curious to note the sort of answer the Vestry of St. Pancras got when they applied to the Chief Commissioner. The Home Secretary told them that if they wanted men to carry out these duties they must go back to the parish constable. Mr. Baggallay's case was well known to all, but it was not the only case in which the Chief Commissioner of Police had tried to ride rough-shod over those who had to administer law in the different districts of London. Where was the present state of things leading to? If the Home Secretary was to have the right to decide what meetings were convenient and what were not, and if the Chief Commissioner was to carry out his instructions without reference to the wishes of Londoners, where was this two-man rule to end? He assured the Government that their troubles in London would go on increasing so long as they did not make up their minds to give the people that local power and organization, the want of which even hon. Members opposite had admitted the people suffered from so much. At the present moment the inhabitants of London were held absolutely at the mercy of officials, or of an office which, like the ostrich, buried its head in the sand, while its legs were bound round with red tape.

MR. BAUMANN (Peckham) said, he hoped that Gentlemen who might follow in this debate would not imitate what he thought was the very bad example of the hon. Member for West St. Pancras (Mr. Lawson), who initiated a discussion on the reform of Local Government in London. This debate was quite difficult enough and quite complicated enough without the importation into it of such a new and foreign difficulty as that. Perhaps, as a Representative of the constituency in which Peckham Rye was situated, he might be allowed to express his thanks, even in his absence, to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) for having forced the Metropolitan Board of Works to mark out a place on Streatham Common and on Peckham Rye within which public meetings ought to be confined. That was a very considerable convenience to the inhabitants of Streatham and Peckham Rye. But that was just what they could not do in Trafalgar Square. They could not mark out a particular plot within which meetings were to be confined. He listened with the very greatest attention to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, because the right hon. Gentleman was, if not the Leader, at any rate the *ad interim* curator of the Liberal Party, and he (Mr. Baumann) was very anxious to know precisely the grounds on which the right hon. Gentleman, speaking in the name of that Party, condemned the Government. Listening with the greatest attention to his speech, so far as he could follow him, he (Mr. Baumann) did not gather that the right hon. Gentleman condemned Her Majesty's Government for the action which they took in November, but for having prohibited, as he said, all public meetings in Trafalgar Square for the future. Well, so far as he (Mr. Baumann) understood the speeches of the Attorney General and the Home Secretary, Her Majesty's Government had done nothing of the kind. They had not prohibited all public meetings for ever and a day in Trafalgar Square. They had prohibited such meetings during such time as might seem good to the Executive Government. Now, this debate had turned almost entirely upon the large and general question of the right of public meeting. That was a question so embedded in conflicting statutes, and so involved in what he might call political metaphysics, that in its argument the real purport of the Motion of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for South Hackney (Sir Charles Russell) had been almost completely obscured. Might he venture to call the attention of the House to what was the main and central purport of the hon. and learned Gentleman's proposition? The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for South Hackney must think them extremely simple in the structure of their minds if he imagined that they did not see through the nature of the move he was making upon the Government of the day. Under the guise of asserting an ancient and time-honoured right, which was not, and which, under an extended suffrage, never could be, in the slightest danger in this country, the hon. and learned Gentleman invited the House to declare that Her Majesty's Government was so little worthy of its confidence, that one of the most elementary functions of the Executive must be taken out of its hands and transferred to a Committee of the Legislature. It was their misfortune to witness daily encroachments upon the domain of the Executive by the Legislature in the shape of needless and idle questions about the administration of the law; but, as a rule, these questions proceeded from those who, without offence, and without disrespect, might be termed irresponsible Members of the House. But now, they had an hon. and learned Gentleman who had filled the office of Attorney General, and who, apparently, was supported by the late Prime Minister of the country, inviting the House to declare that one of the most elementary duties of any Government should be handed over to a Committee of the Legislature as a subject for inquiry. He (Mr. Baumann) would undertake to say that no undergraduate going in for a pass degree and being asked to define the terms "Legislature" and "Executive," would be guilty of so gross a confusion of ideas and duties as the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for South Hackney. Either the Government was absolutely incompetent to manage the affairs of the Empire, or it was not. If it was incompetent, let hon. Members convince the House and the country of the fact, and turn the Government out; but if Her Majesty's Ministers possessed the slightest competence to manage the affairs of the Empire, then, to his mind, they would be stultifying themselves and abdicating the first duties of a Government if they allowed any Committee of the House to come between them and a mere matter of police regulation. The hon. and learned Gentleman, who knew that the law on this subject was perfectly clear and perfectly well-established, invited them to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into the conditions under which public meetings might be held in the metropolis. And for what purpose? In order, as he said in his Motion, to prevent ill-will and disorder. There would always be ill-will and disorder amongst the malicious and disorderly when they came into conflict with the Executive Government, but it was the duty of any Government worthy of the name to ignore ill-will and to put down disorder. There was a point touched upon by his hon. Friend the Member for West St. Pancras to which he would here like to allude. The hon. Member referred to the vast responsibility that Her Majesty's Government should feel from the fact that they had behind them (as the hon. Member incorrectly said) 48 Conservative Members. So much importance had been attached to the Motion of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for South Hackney, that it might not be amiss to discount the just weight and authority which attached to the hon. and learned Gentleman's name by reminding the House of how very small a proportion of London he and his Friends represented, and by propounding a doubt whether, upon this particular question, those Gentlemen had at their back the approval of their constituents. London contributed to this House 62 Members, 51 of whom generally supported Her Majesty's Government, and 11 of whom sat and acted with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). But there was more than that in this proportion of five to one. What evidence had they that of this residuary sixth of Gladstonian electors in the Metropolis the majority were in favour of the continuance of public meetings in Trafalgar Square? If they looked at the Petitions which had been presented to the House they found that 5,000 signatures had been attached to one praying that such meetings should be discontinued, and if they looked at the petitions presented to the House favourable to the continuance of these meetings they found no more than 637 signatures attached to them. But as a Metropolitan candidate of many years standing, he regretted to say he had some experience of London Liberalism, and knowing as he did that London Liberalism, while strongly tinctured with Dissent, was quite untainted by Socialism, he ventured to express a strong doubt whether the majority of the constituents of hon. Gentlemen opposite supported them in their contention, that Trafalgar Square should be turned into a bear garden, and his doubt on this head was not only an inference from his experience of the average London Liberal, whom he knew was quite as much opposed as the average London Conservative to the red flag and the black flag and tumultuous processions, but it was an inference from the action of the hon. Gentlemen themselves. How many Metropolitan Members were present in Trafalgar Square on that memorable Sunday when the hon. Member for North-West Lanarkshire (Mr. Cunninghame Graham) was arrested? Where were the Houndsditch Hampdens? Where were the Sidneys and Russells from Shoreditch and Bethnal Green, who were always ready to die on the nearest scaffold in the sacred cause of uncivil and irreligious liberty? Why, not one of them was there in Trafalgar Square. Perhaps they were taking tea in Northumberland Avenue, waiting for the corpses to come in. But at any rate they were conspicuous by their absence. They left the hon. Member for North-West Lanarkshire to take the thumps and imprisonment, and now that he had emerged reeking from the fray, these prudent patriots came forward and offered to plaster his cracked crown with their paper resolutions. But even assuming for the purposes of argument that the entire number of Liberal electors in London were in favour of the continuance of these meetings in Trafalgar Square, a very large assumption, especially after the speech of the hon. Member for Reading (Mr. Murdock), even assuming that, they were still face to face with this fact, that an overwhelming majority of London, something like five-sixths, were on one side in this question, and a microscopic minority of not more than one-sixth were on the other side. He thought it would be conceded by every rational man that some overwhelming principle of public policy, some principle of cardinal and catholic importance, must be cited to justify the sacrifice of the wishes and convenience of so large a majority to those of so small a minority. No doubt the right of public meeting was such a principle of public policy—was a principle of cardinal and catholic value; but to say that the right of public meeting was attached to a particular spot was childish and absurd, and to contend that with 10 or 12 parks and with hundreds of public halls in London open to anybody who liked to hire them, many of them being offered gratuitously by their owners—to contend that because public meetings were prevented in Trafalgar Square, therefore the right of public meeting was taken away, was perfectly farcical. The truth was that these meetings were held in Trafalgar Square not because it was a convenient place, but because it was an inconvenient place—because it afforded the best basis for the practice of intimidation and annoyance. Trafalgar Square was chosen because it was in the middle of those shops which Burke described as "bursting with opulence." It was chosen because it was in the middle of the clubs and the plate glass. The fact was that the only objects for which the majority of Londoners were asked to tolerate a colossal nuisance in their midst was to afford a field of display for the crazy vanity of a few feather brains, the tools in their turn of an excited editor, aping the absurd airs of a Tribune—

> "Who puts his shall—his popular shall—against
> A graver bench than ever frowned in Greece."

The sum of his business was this—that a vast and overwhelming proportion of the electors of London, if they took into account the women who are non-voters, a still larger proportion of the residents in London, and a great number of people in the country who had been prevented from coming to London to shop through fear of these meetings, all these classes of persons were in favour of maintaining Trafalgar Square as it had hitherto been, a beautiful public place of resort; that the minority who wished to turn Trafalgar Square into a Jacobin Club was a very small minority, and not a very respectable minority; that the holding of public meetings in any part of Trafalgar Square was incompatible with its maintenance as a place of public resort, because of the obvious and proved impossibility of confining the meetings within reasonable limits, and that, therefore, it was the duty of the Government, for the preservation of order and for the protection of property, to prohibit in future all meetings of any kind in any part of the Square. They had already been informed that the Executive Government intended to take away the right of public meeting there for a certain time. They had not told the House how long they intended to keep the embargo up. For his part, he should like to see it made perpetual. He should like to see Trafalgar Square laid down in turf and turned into a place like Leicester Square. If that were done, it would be what it ought to be—namely, an ornament to the Metropolis. London had done a great deal for the present Government. It had returned 51 Members who supported them, and London expected the Government to do something for it. It expected that at least the Government would preserve order and protect the vast stores of property which were accumulated at the West End.

Mr. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said, he had, on one or two occasions, endeavoured to catch the eye of Mr. Speaker since the speech of the hon. and learned Attorney General on the other side, which he felt required an answer from some Liberal Metropolitan Member, and to which an answer should be given as early as possible. The Attorney General made some remarks and found fault with the endeavour which was made to tack on to the Motion before the House the Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh), and the hon. and learned Gentleman had expressed an inability to see what the one portion had to do with the other. Presumably the hon. and learned Member held the same view with respect to an Amendment which stood in his (Mr. Stuart's) name. The inability of the hon. and learned Gentleman to see the connection between these two Motions arose from what, no doubt, was his opinion — namely, the view that hon. Members on the Opposition side of the House below the Gangway were the friends of disorder. If the hon. and learned Gentleman would look into the Resolutions he would see what their object was—that they desired to re-establish, as far as possible, and to maintain the confidence which the people of the Metropolis ought to have in the police and in the management of public meeting in London. He (Mr. Stuart), for one, felt that there was no object which could be more sacred to the mind of any responsible person, or anyone in the House in connection with public affairs at this moment, than to maintain that confidence in the powers that put the law into execution, which had happily been maintained in most parts of Great Britain. The object of the Resolution of the hon. and learned Member for South Hackney was to introduce order and clearness into the subject, which was at present, from the debates in the House, evidently one on which varied opinions existed. Could there be anything more unfortunate for the Government of the day to do than, after the events which had taken place in connection with Trafalgar Square in November last, to positively put down their foot and say that there was, in their opinion, really no right of public meeting at all, and that any public meeting—of course he meant in open spaces—in the Metropolis was exercised entirely subject to their supervision and free will? He (Mr. Stuart) believed that such an action had, unfortunately, got a tendency to increase the present uneasy feeling that there was in the Metropolis. He believed that those who moved the Resolution, and those who moved the Amendments which were going along with it, would be found to be those who were really keeping the peace of the Metropolis by endeavouring to put clearly the right of public meeting, and to establish it under suitable conditions. The hon. and learned Attorney General went so far as to say, or to represent those hon. Members as saying, that they desired that there should be an absolute power to hold a meeting at any hour, of any size, and to give any amount of free will to everybody in Trafalgar Square and other open spaces. That was not at all the object of those who moved and those who supported the Resolution of the hon. and learned Member for South Hackney. They were perfectly aware that if the right of public meeting was to be of advantage to the community, and if it was to continue unimpaired, it must be exercised subject to proper regulations and to any useful restrictions that might be required. But they, at the same time, were of opinion that in the case of Trafalgar Square and of other open spaces in London where meetings at present were commonly held, it would be desirable to apply provisions similar to the Parks Regulation Act of 1872. He would point out what it was in connection with that Act which gave security to public meetings and rendered them free from danger and alarm. There was a body established, not the police, but separate and apart from the police, to whom anyone desiring to hold a meeting in Hyde Park, or other place under their control, was required to apply. He thought that distinction of a separate body was a very valuable distinction, which did not, in any sense, exist in the case of Trafalgar Square or other like situated open spaces. There was another very important point in the regulation under that Act which had received the sanction of the House, and that was the notice that had to be given some days beforehand to Her Majesty's Board of Works, the body concerned, of the intention to hold a meeting. Such a notification took in the case, for instance, of Hyde Park, precisely the same position that the engaging of a hall would take, were there a hall suitable for such a meeting; and it had been his experience that the Metropolitan Board of Works treated very fairly any proposals that were brought before them, and were very willing to enter into any arrangement for the good order and good conduct of the meetings. And he could feel no doubt whatever that were such an Act in its general character extended to Trafalgar Square, the meetings there would be free from all those features which had from time to time been objected to, and that the uneasy feeling which existed in a large measure on the part of the people of London, that they were losing some right through the action of the Government, would cease and disappear. The next point on which those who were bringing forward these Resolutions were endeavouring to secure peace and confidence in London was contained in the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Northampton. The hon. Gentleman moved for an inquiry into the conduct of the police. Do not let anyone think that an attack was being made on the police force in general. On the contrary, it was necessary, in order to obtain such a Committee of Inquiry as the hon. Member for Northampton proposed, to show some *primâ facie* case of improper action on the part of certain members of the police force. That such improper action had taken place on the part of several members—a considerable number of members of the police force—he thought, after the speech of his hon. Friend, and after such other particulars as they would, he hoped, have brought before them before the end of the debate, there could be no reasonable ground for denying. Surely, to inquire into such allegations as had been brought forward by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Northampton would not in themselves lead to the weakening of the force. On the contrary, in the interests of the police themselves—in the interests of their proper position and utility—and in the interests of the peace of the Metropolis, and, above all, in the interests of the confidence of the people of London in the police, he believed that such an inquiry was urgently required. As to the Amendment of which he (Mr. Stuart) had given Notice, it would be out of Order to refer to it in more than one passing word. As had been said in many quarters of the

House, it was hard to believe that any regulation of the circumstances under which meetings were held, or any inquiry into the conduct of the police, could establish what might be called a stable equilibrium in the position of the police in the Metropolis, for the growth of confidence was a very slow growth, and the confidence of the people of London in the Metropolitan Police had been sadly shaken. The question had arisen how was confidence to be re-established, and he could not believe that it could be effectually and permanently re-established, except by utilizing their experience from what certainly existed in England—namely, that confidence was best established and best maintained in the police force, when that force was in the hands of the ratepayers for whom it acted. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General, and not a few other Members on the other side of the House, had spoken with great force of the meetings of the unemployed which had taken taken place previously to the 13th November. They had all fallen, it seemed to him, into the same error of conceiving that the meetings of the unenployed which took place previously to the 13th November and the meeting of the 13th November itself had anything whatever to do with one another. The meeting of the 13th November was one which was carried out by the same body as had organized many meetings in the Metropolis, both in Trafalgar Square and elsewhere, with great success and free from all elements of disorder, and from any cause or possible cause of alarm. In speaking of the meetings of the unemployed which were not interfered with by the Government, he should like to say this—that he felt that, however disorderly they might have been—and certainly, in many cases, they were disorderly—the expression of opinion by the poor and the weak and the miserable of this great City was not a thing which could lightly be repressed, even though that expression of opinion might have connected with it many foolish statements and many foolish proposals. It should be the aim of all in the House to ascertain, as far as they could ascertain it, where the root of the difficulty of these unemployed lay, and that could not be ascertained without listening to what they themselves had to say. They had not the means of hiring large halls for their meetings; their speeches were not reported in the newspapers; they were obliged to hold their meetings in some places or under some circumstances which enabled them to attract attention. And here, with respect to these meetings and the unemployed and their demands, let him repeat in the House words which he had used elsewhere. There was no doubt in the demands of these people something, much of which was wrong, and much of which was erroneous; but the origin of their demands was that a real cause and a real trouble existed, which was not only felt by these people, but was a trouble in consequence to the whole body politic. There was nothing that he and his Friends felt more at this moment in the beginning of these democratic times than the necessity of guarding the security of property. That security was a thing at which they all must aim; but he had said this—that whereas the law had in the past very largely aimed at securing to those who had the enjoyment of what they had, it ought also to set about more than it had done creating that condition of existence in which those who earned should get their fair share of what they earned, and thereby establish one of the best sources of security that those who had should secure the free and undisputed enjoyment of what they had. The meeting of the 13th November, which was undertaken by a number of persons well accustomed to carry through such meetings, and who in other cases carried them through without any cause of alarm and without any danger, differed also in another respect from these meetings of the unemployed. They took place under circumstances in which there might be, and there was, considerable evil done to the shopkeepers and others in the neighbourhood. He should like here to call attention to what an hon. Member, who quoted a considerable number of letters respecting the falling-off of visitors at hotels and the like, replied in answer to a question which he (Mr. Stuart) interposed. The hon. Member said that the letters as to the falling-off of visitors at the hotels, and of persons coming from foreign countries to London, were dated subsequent to November 13, bearing out what had been all along said, that it was the action of the Government and the authorities which created the alarm. But that meeting was held on a Sunday; the traffic was absent; the streets were not thronged with ordinary passengers. The shops were shut, so that the difficulties which were said to have existed, and which did exist, in connection with other meetings, had not existed in connection with this one. It was remarkably unfortunate for the Government, who disavowed all intention of interfering with political meetings, and meetings for *bonâ fide* political purposes, that the first meeting they did interfere with was held for a *bonâ fide* political purpose, and free from all those subsidiary disadvantages—if he might call them so—attendant on the other meetings. As to the meeting of the 13th November, it was said that some of the people went to it with serious arms. So far that was a great misfortune; but they had before them evidence which they had got from many sources, that club after club which came to the meeting in the procession, in order to evade any appearance of violence or threat, left behind them, intentionally, not only their sticks, but even their umbrellas, and that they had arranged as they advanced towards the Square to have some sort of Homeric controversy with the police who would meet them, in order that they might assert their legal right, as they believed, to go to the public meeting in the Square, and then turn aside and go to Hyde Park or elsewhere. Evidence largely to that effect, no doubt, could be brought before any Committee, should the Government repent of the position they had taken up, and enable the House to establish a Committee of Inquiry. The processionists had reason to believe that the police would meet them without violence and without force. Considerable confidence had grown up in the police, in the gradual growth of that slow-growing plant, since the Metropolitan Police was first introduced into London, and in the previous large meetings and gatherings which had been held the police had offered very considerable help. In regard to one of those meetings which he was connected with last Easter Monday, he had had occasion to write thanking the police for the great care and good sense with which they had conducted their various arrangements; but with regard to that meeting and with respect to other meetings which passed off with great ease and quietness, those whose cue was always to represent the people as turbulent had used before the event language no less inflamed than they did of the meeting in Trafalgar Square. If anyone would turn to *The Morning Post* of Friday, April 8, a few days before that Hyde Park meeting, they would see a leading article there which contained the following words:—

> "It can only be by some unfortunate technicality that such a meeting can escape being called treasonable. Public opinion must not allow itself to be blinded by a name. It has now to choose under which king it will serve. A rule shared by Parliament with the mob is a farce to-day, and will be a tragedy to-morrow. There is no middle course. There can be no delay in the decision."

The Executive Government, fortunately, did not yield to that incitement. He had no doubt, if they had, they would have plunged London into the same disorder and condition into which they plunged it on the 13th November last. The meeting was uninterfered with, and passed off peaceably. Some journals had made a considerable effort to represent the people of London as turbulent and not law-abiding. He would read an extract from *The Observer*, of December 11, 1887—a passage from an account of a meeting of a body styling itself "The English Land Restoration League." The objects of that body, like the objects of the Socialists, might be good or bad. That had nothing to do with the present question, and as yet the Government had not ventured to prevent any meeting on the specified ground that they did not agree with its object. The only instance in which they did that was in Ireland, in the case of the suppressed branches of the National League. But of this meeting, here was the concluding part of the account—

> "A force of foot police attended from the local police station, and was under the direction of Inspectors Alstin and Robinson. Several horse patrols were also in the neighbourhood of the gathering"—

an item of news which he would venture to say had practically no other utility than to alarm nervous people, and to keep up the delusion—the wicked and wickedly fostered delusion—that the people of London generally were turbulent and law-breaking. It was short shrift that these gentry would give to the common people. Here was a quotation from *The Globe* of May 13, referring to a meeting of Socialists. It said—

> "There is really no need to waste public time, outside the House any more than in it, by discussing the rights and wrongs of the case. The first duty of the police is emphatically not to protect public meetings, which are dangerous to public order, but to suppress them."

All very good; but the whole thing lay in the words "dangerous to public order," and his contention was that whatever of the nature of alarm and danger it partook was entirely due to the action of the Government and the police. That was not the first time events of that kind had happened in connection with the police force. An instance in which an inquiry into the action of the police was granted by the House had been quoted by his hon. Friend the Member for Northampton. He would give another, which was still more germane to the case in point. A meeting announced to take place on the 13th of May, 1833, in Coldbath Fields, was proclaimed as an unlawful assembly; but the people gathered, and a conflict ensued between them and the new police, in the course of which one policeman was killed and two others were grievously wounded. On July 12 a Select Committee, with power to send for persons, papers, and records, was appointed to inquire into the conduct of the police in dispersing the meeting. It reported on August 23. It exonerated the police from blame, at any rate on most points; but its 7th Resolution was as follows:—

> "That, while it is the opinion of this Committee that the conduct of the police as a body on the occasion in question afforded no just ground of complaint, they feel it a duty to advert to the importance of the utmost caution and vigilance on the part of the superintendents and other officers of the police to check any unnecessary violence among their men on all occasions, but more especially where large bodies of them are employed in the preservation or suppression of disturbance, and the maintenance of the public peace."

Not a word of such caution had escaped from any Member of the Government to those responsible for the action of the police. The right of public meeting in Trafalgar Square had been much disputed, and it had been treated by others better able to deal with the matter than he was; he only desired to read to the House an extract from a letter he had received from a gentleman who was engaged in the temperance organization of London. The writer said—

> "It happens that, in conjunction with a friend, I have had an exceptional experience of meetings in Trafalgar Square. We have held more meetings there than any other men in London, having conducted them weekly, weather permitting, during all the summer months from the beginning of May to the end of September each year from 1878 to 1885; and I supplied certain information to Mr. Saunders when charged at Bow Street which was regarded as valuable, inasmuch as it tended to show, on the authority of the Chief Commissioner of Police, that the present interpretation of the law by those who contend for the right of meeting is the same as the official interpretation during the years mentioned. When about to start Sunday morning meetings at Trafalgar Square, on the first Sunday in May, 1878, I made the police acquainted with our intention. Having no reply, my friend and I attended for the purpose; but just as we commenced the constable on duty interrupted us; and upon an appeal to a sergeant, who professed to know nothing of our right to be there, or of our communication, suggested it would be well if he were to simply report the circumstances, and that we should postpone our meeting until the following week. This we agreed to do. The same evening some police officers made inquiries about me at my lodgings in North Street, Westminster, and I afterwards received an acknowledgment of my letter, signed by Colonel Henderson, and dated 7th May, 1878, in which he said—'I have no power to grant any permission to hold meetings in Trafalgar Square, and I cannot but think it a very unsuitable place for public meetings on Sundays.' I replied to Colonel Henderson, explaining our object, and simply asking not to be interfered with. The next letter I received, dated 11th May—which was left in the custody of the Court after my evidence before the magistrate in the Graham and Burns case—stated that the Chief Commissioner had neither power to prohibit or permit meetings, and that the police could only act according to instructions, without regard to the object of the meeting. The words underlined are significant, taken in conjunction with subsequent action. Acting on our right, we continued the meetings, and afterwards received an intimation that the police had received instructions not to interfere. Such instructions were literally repeated year by year as our intention to resume the meetings was announced. Thus, and according to all usage up to the recent action, it would appear that our interpretation of the law now was the official interpretation. I ought to add that Mr. Poland, in cross-examination, after I had proved receipt of the second letter, sought to show that our meetings, being quiet, ordinary temperance meetings, could not be regarded as objectionable. This is answered by the fact that the Chief Commissioner did express opinion against the meetings, but virtually admitted he had no right or power to interfere."

Before leaving this part of the subject, he would say that undoubtedly there was danger and alarm in Trafalgar Square on the 13th of November; but the danger arose from filling the Square with armed men to prevent the people going there. No people had more firmly endeavoured to prevent a recurrence of such danger than those who represented the Liberal Party in London. Passing the Resolution even with the addition of the Amendment would not entirely suffice. Continued confidence in the police could not be expected so long as the force was in the hands of the Executive Government of the day, necessarily representing one Party. It was a most unfortunate position for the police, and the source of many troubles. Let them act ever so immaculately, they could not interfere with any political meeting, where even there might be just ground for interference, without raising in the minds of the people of the Metropolis grave suspicion of the propriety and motives of their action. He desired to set the Government free from that difficulty; to free the police from that suspicion. It would require the best wits and firmest minds to define the exact position of the police force in the future, but warnings were offered from experience. In France there was a police force which had developed in one way, and in the boroughs of England there was a development in another direction. In France bureaucratic centralization had borne its full fruit. In France the police—in Paris at any rate—had ceased to a great extent to be that protective force it ought to be, and had become the ready instrument of oppression, revolution, and personal ambition. We had in London seeds of the same dangerous growth. As in Paris, the police were under the control of the Executive Government, and with a head irresponsible to the people. The people had no power over their police, and such an arrangement was apt for political misrule, and still more apt for the suspicion of such. In the towns of England, on the other hand, there was no such suspicion or fear of conflict, for the police were the servants rather than the masters of the people, and any complaint of police action was at once referred to the Watch Committees. He looked forward with great hope and expectation to the day when there could no longer be such debates as these in the House of Commons. ["Hear, hear!"] Not that the debates would cease for reasons hon. Members applauded, not because defence of popular rights would cease, but because the people would have a Representative Court of Appeal short of Parliament. ["Hear, hear!"] The present position in London was a standing menace to the liberties of England, and steps in the wrong direction were being taken in London just now. The police of London had in the last few years become more and more an embarracked body, separated from the civil life of the people. He would have them restored to a position of a civil and less of a military body. Surely, Londoners were not less capable than the inhabitants of other towns of managing their own police affairs? The state of London was a standing menace to liberty, and he called the attention of the House to how this matter stood. The general Police Act for England was passed in 1839, and at that time the police were under the management of and paid by the localities. But in 1856 an unfortunate change was made, and a quarter of the charge for police was placed on the Consolidated Fund, a proportionate share of control being given to the Central Authority. In 1875 a further step in the same direction was taken, and the contribution from Imperial Funds raised to one-half. Further, he would point out that when a Conservative Government carried out the centralizing policy in reference to prisons, it was an open secret that the then Home Secretary—Sir R. Assheton Cross—made inquiries in several of the large boroughs to ascertain if it could be made acceptable to local opinion that a larger share of the cost of the police should fall on the Imperial Fund, and the management pass into the hands of the Central Authority. An excuse, a possibility for that happening, a ground of argument by which it could be urged, existed in the position of the present Metropolitan Police Force. He therefore urged the House to adopt not only the original Resolution but also the Amendment, and to adopt them in the interests of peace, of security, and of good government in the Metropolis.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) said, the hon. Member for the Hoxton Division of Shoreditch (Mr. Stuart) had made a very interesting speech, with the greater part of which many on that side would thoroughly agree; but hardly anything in the speech had anything to do with the Resolution or the Amendment. Municipal Government in London, or in Ireland, the stopping of the bureaucratic tendencies, the transfer of prisons to the control of Government, all these were interesting matters to be brought up for discussion at a proper time. The hon. Member appealed to Provincial Members on the question, and Provincial Members, though they might not know much about London, were perfectly well aware of what the people of the Provinces thought with regard to this Trafalgar Square business; and when hon. Members got to know what those thoughts were they would see that they had failed to blind the people of the Provinces as to the nature of these proceedings by references to the want of London Municipal Government and other things. He agreed that the poor should have facilities for expressing their grievances. Who amongst them wished for a moment to deny such? It was, indeed, in favour of the liberties of the poor that law-abiding observances were to be insisted upon. Then the hon. Member asked that the Amendment should be agreed to, having a few minutes before stated that nothing in the Resolution or the Amendment would secure the object he had in view. He was reluctant to impose himself on the attention of the House, but on this occasion he was specially unwilling to give a silent vote. It had been stated by more than one speaker that this was not a Party question. In our system of Party Government too many things were reduced to the level of a lever to lift the Opposition into power, but he trusted that no Party would ever allow the question of law and order, on which all government must exist, to be degraded into a Party weapon to secure a Party triumph. An appeal was made by his right hon. Friend to Dissentient Members of the Liberal Party—what his right hon. Friend meant he did not know. Did he refer to the so-called Unionist Liberals the "remnant that remaineth" of the old Liberal Party, which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) so thoroughly smashed in 1886? His hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hackney (Sir Charles Russell) objected to the term "Separatists;" then why did he apply to others the term "Dissentient Liberals?" To be Dissentients there must be something to dissent from—would his hon. and learned Friend have the courage to define the thing from which they were dissenting? He had not permission to do that. The hon. and learned Member for Dundee said it was unwise to bring the Crown into the controversy, but he was inclined to think it was an unwise thing to bring on the controversy at all, and hon. Members would find that they had attained very little from the alliance they had made, and the new form of Liberalism they had introduced. The hon. and learned Member for Dundee said—and he was not the only one who had said it—that the respectable artizans of London were divorced from law and order. He (Mr. Jesse Collings) did not believe a word of it. Of the respectable artizans, the workmen—by which he meant the men who worked—he did not believe for a moment that they were divorced from law and order. Just to the extent which that democracy to which his hon. and learned Friend referred gained ground would the workmen recognize that law and order formed the basis of democracy, without which it could not progress and would cease to exist. There was one feature in the controversy he regretted. No one on the Liberal side had uttered one word of sympathy as to the way in which the police had been served. In the thronged community of London, men, women, and children went about the streets, not thinking of arming themselves for self-defence, simply because they trusted in and relied on the protection of the law, and the representatives of the law. He could understand the terror that would be excited if for a moment there were introduced into the minds of men, women, or children a feeling that there was anything like rottenness in the representatives of the power of the law. What made the policeman so powerful? Man for man he was not physically superior to his fellow-citizens, and as a body the police were much less numerous. It was only because they bore the badge of representatives of the law, only because it was felt that the whole power of the Kingdom was behind them, that half-a-dozen policemen could in tolerably large towns enable the inhabitants to walk the streets in peace and sleep securely in their homes. They were not friends of a Liberal democracy who would put out a finger to disturb this state of things. It was this that Liberals had been fighting for for the last 50 years, but the proceedings and the speeches of so-called Liberals during the debate contained doctrines that did much to check the progress made and the victory almost achieved. Nearly the whole of the controversy had turned upon legal points, and to non-legal minds it was an intellectual pleasure to listen. The case as put by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for South Hackney (Sir Charles Russell) seemed to admit of no contradiction, and in listening to him they thought he was right. But when the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) began to speak in reply the non-legal mind was disposed to consider that he, too, was absolutely right. This was the bewilderment the non-legal mind got into by the everlasting dealing with legal technicalities and subtleties which had been how the subject had been treated. It would seem impertinent for him to refer to what had been said on nice points of law, but there were one or two points that presented difficulties to the non-legal mind. For instance, that part of the speech of the hon. and learned Member for South Hackney (Sir Charles Russell) which occupied so much time, and to which he attached so much importance, was the "historical creation of Trafalgar Square." He did not think that had anything to do with it. He had no doubt that at one time people went bird's-nesting in Trafalgar Square. If Trafalgar Square were suitable for pursuits of that sort then it was hardly suitable for them now. One could quite understand that 30 years ago there might be many places in this City and in other towns of England quite suitable for a purpose for which they were no longer suitable. There had been much talk about the right of ingress and thoroughfare. Of course there was a right of ingress and thoroughfare in the streets, but if 500 or 600 people possessing that right were to stop and to address each other, and form a public meeting, the whole case would be altered. Let them come down from these legal heights to the region of common sense—he meant, by common sense, the sense of common people; the sort of argument which the people of the country would understand. They might depend upon it that the majority of people would not understand many of the arguments hon. Members seemed to rely upon. Now, the Resolution must be taken with the Amendment moved to it; must be taken with the speeches which had been delivered in the House in the course of the debate, and with the speeches which were being and had been delivered elsewhere; it must be taken with all those curious proceedings which had taken place at public meetings. That being so, the Amendment, which appeared in itself so very innocent, was a thing of very grave meaning. Two statements were made by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for South Hackney which seemed to him to surrender the whole case. In the first place, the hon. and learned Gentleman admitted that previous to the 13th of November there had been held a number of meetings of a disorderly character and causing considerable annoyance, inconvenience, and injury to persons whose businesses surrounded Trafalgar Square; and he admitted that it was with a view of preventing the recurrence of these things that the Government took action. His hon. and learned Friend said very fairly—

> "I do not question and never have questioned the right of the Executive to stop any meeting which they can satisfy any proper tribunal was an unlawful meeting, either because of its avowed object, or because it was calculated to inspire the minds of ordinary persons in the neighbourhood with fear."

His hon. and learned Friend practically admitted that there were abundant warnings given to the Government, and that the Government had a right to interfere. He (Mr. Jesse Collings) took it that the right carried the duty. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Well, Parliament did not put powers into the hands of the Executive without the intention that the Executive should use them, and therefore he took it that the right carried the duty. At any rate, if the Government had not exercised the right they would have had to bear the responsibility of whatever consequences resulted. According to the admissions of the Mover of the Motion the Government had warnings of the necessity, and they had power to exercise the right. They did exercise it, and according to the opinions of the jury at the recent trial they exercised it properly, and it was well known that the exercise of the right had resulted in the public good. Suppose the Government had not acted, and suppose the police had been overpowered and a part of London had been sacked—and that was not an extravagant supposition by any means—what sort of a Resolution would right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Opposition Bench be moving at the present time in that event? They would be moving a Resolution condemning this weak and miserable Government that did not know how to perform the first duty of Government—namely, that of governing. He did not forget that his hon. and learned Friend (Sir Charles Russell) referred to the continuous character of the regulation affecting Trafalgar Square, but that was a point which the people of England would not attach much importance to. It was too nice, and in view of the great things that had to be settled and the dangers that had to be encountered it disappeared altogether. There was no question of free speech in this matter whatever. There was no question of the right of public speaking; nothing of the kind was involved. The only question involved was as to whether free speech and the right of public meeting should be so arranged as to be a terror, an inconvenience, and a source of danger to other members of the community who had as much right to protection as those who held the meeting. It was really a question whether the people might live in peace in their own houses. They had heard much talk about the rights of the people. Which people were they who were referred to? Matters must be so arranged that while they secured the rights of one section of the people they did not do away with the rights of another. Let them take the case of America. He had taken considerable interest in this matter, having always thought himself a great upholder of free speech. In America there was free speech and there was the right of public meeting; but he questioned if there was any country in the world in which an Executive was armed with such powers for the regulation of meetings with regard to time, place, and purpose, particularly of place, as America, and he shuddered to think what would have happened if the occurrences in Trafalgar Square had taken place in America. He should like to know what would have happened if such occurrences had taken place in Switzerland or Belgium?

He was glad to think that in this country we could secure law and order and free speech and the right of free meeting without resorting to the terrible expedients to which the Executive in America had recourse. His hon. and learned Friend (Sir Charles Russell) said that there was a feeling of disquiet widely entertained. He assured his hon. and learned Friend that there was such a feeling, but that it was entertained in a very opposite direction to that in which his hon. and learned Friend presumed it was entertained. He (Mr. Jesse Collings) noticed that in all parts of the country, about the time of the meeting in Trafalgar Square, there was an angry feeling on the part of people of all classes at the supposed inaction of the Government. He was not speaking of London; he gave the supporters of the Resolution London. He knew what he was speaking about. In the Provinces and amongst the law-abiding people — the solid-thinking people of the Provinces—there was unquestionably at the time a very angry feeling on the supposed inaction of the Government. He was not speaking of the shouting classes; he was not speaking of the Caucus for instance, but he was speaking of that vast mass—that vast majority of the people of England —stay-at-home men; the arm-chair politicians. [*Laughter.*] Yes; he knew those men; they had been a trouble in former times because they won elections, and they had won elections sometimes against the Party to which he belonged. His hon. Friends upon the Opposition side of the House had got in the Caucus a machine, but they did not know how to use it. He was present at its birth, attended it in its infancy, and he knew its tricks. Tools must be for those who could use them, and, because they did not know how to gauge its proper value, the Caucus was at the bottom of all the misfortunes of his hon. Friends. He hoped they would be wiser in future, because when that body promised them large majorities and——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The constitution of the body to which the hon. Gentleman refers is not now before the House.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS said, he begged the Speaker's pardon for having been led into digression. The constitution of the Caucus had certainly no apparent connection with the Resolution. He had intended to remark when he made the digression that in his speech his hon. and learned Friend did not utter one word in defence of disorder. He was sure nothing would be further from his hon. and learned Friend's wish or will to do anything to promote disorder, but he should like to have heard something more from the hon. and learned Gentleman and from others in favour of law and order. He should like to have heard from them, in defence of the police, some recognition of the difficulties of the police; he should like to have heard something which would have indicated that there was another side to the question, because they had been told to-night that there were 112 policemen who were severely injured, some of them permanently. That was a matter which really demanded their sympathy in some form or other, because these men had acted in the pursuit of their duty. The police were the arm of the Executive, and when 112 of them were knocked about by people whom they did not seek after at all, and when this happened when they were in the pursuit of duty imposed upon them, the House ought at least to have heard a little more expressions of sympathy with them. Again, let him refer to America. If hon. Members read the American papers they would know that most severe sentences were inflicted upon any men who opposed the police or put themselves in the way of the police in the execution of their duty. That was quite right, because it was the only safeguard for a democratic country. There was only one other remark he had to make before he sat down. His hon. Friend the Member for North-East Bethnal Green (Mr. Howell) made a remark which, in his opinion, was very regrettable. The hon. Gentleman said the people of this country had not yet learned, but were learning, that the only way to get justice done in the House of Commons was to create scenes of disorder. That, as he had said, was a very regrettable remark to make in the House of Commons. To him the government and management of 4,000,000 or 5,000,000 of human beings, with all their varied interests and troubles and everything else, was a very serious thing. Society itself in a manner hung upon it. When he heard such sentiments proceeding from a democrat he thought it was regrettable in the highest degree. He could quite understand it if they lived in a country with a despotic Government, but they lived in a country where every man had got a vote, where the Executive had no hereditary power or despotic power, but was the creation of the people and the Parliament; and, that being so, it was mere folly to talk about the interference of the police with this and with that. It was not only folly, but it seemed to him wicked to utter such a sentiment as the one he had referred to, which was to be reported and to be read by thousands of people who would, perhaps, put a very wrong construction upon it. There was no doubt the action of the Government would be criticized in the constituencies. Southwark, for instance, did not agree with it; but Deptford did and Doncaster did. He did not think that any man who could by letter or telegram, or in any other way, suggest to the people any other appeal than to the ballot box was a friend of the democracy—a friend of the poor. In fact, such a man had yet to learn how democratic and popular government was to be built up. He (Mr. Jesse Collings), for one, had no hesitation in voting on this occasion. Hon. Members might move as innocent-looking Resolutions or Amendments as they chose, but the common-sense feeling of the people of this country would be that the question at issue was really whether or not a certain number of people should disobey or defy the law they did not agree with—whether or not they might break policemen's heads who, in the execution of their duty, sought to enforce the law. Such was what the people of England understood by this Resolution; and he was very much mistaken if his hon. and right hon. Friends on the Front Opposition Bench did not find that they had made a great blunder from their own point of view by allowing those Resolutions to be proposed.

MR. LOCKWOOD (York): I cannot follow the hon. Member who has just sat down (Mr. Jesse Collings) through his somewhat discursive observations; for if I were to attempt to do so I should bring down upon myself that condemnation which the hon. Member brought down upon himself. From one point of view, I admit the observations of the hon. Member have been of interest. He has given to the House the confessions of an old Caucus-monger. The hon. Member told us that managers of Caucuses have forgotten the tricks of the Caucus. I daresay they forget them at the time they lost the services of the hon. Member. [*Cries of* "Order!"] Well, I apologize, and will not pursue this line any further. The hon. and learned Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) gave a challenge to this side of the House which I have very great pleasure in accepting. It has been already pointed out in the course of this debate that if the Government really believe in their case, and are really serious in contending not merely that it is a question which may be disputed, but that the legal proposition they put forward is one which is beyond doubt, and, therefore, not fit to be a subject of inquiry, why did they not test the legal position when they had the opportunity of prosecuting Mr. William Saunders? The Attorney General told the House that it would have been impossible for the Government to have raised the question in the prosecution of Mr. Saunders. The hon. and learned Gentleman also invited any person sitting on this side who assumed to himself any knowledge of the legal condition of things existing with regard to Mr. Saunders' case to point to him the mode in which that prosecution might have been instituted and maintained. I would undertake, if the hon. and learned Gentleman were here, to give him the information; but, in his absence, I will give it to the Solicitor General, pointing out the two modes by which the Government, if in earnest, might have raised this very question in the prosecution of Mr. Saunders in the Police Act. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General mentioned a prosecution under a local Police Act for obstructing a highway; and, as similar provisions existed in the Metropolitan Police Act, a similar charge might have been made against Mr. Saunders, and it would have been open to him to have set up a defence involving the point at issue. The Home Secretary said the notice of Sir Charles Warren was issued under the 52nd section of 2 & 3 *Vict.* The 54th section of that Act provides that every person shall be liable to a penalty of not more than 40*s.* who, within the limits of the Metropolitan Police Act, shall commit certain offences; and one of these is wilfully disregarding or not conforming himself to the directions issued under the section. Sir Charles Warren issued his notice under the section; Mr. Saunders gave notice that he would disregard it, and he went to the place and disregarded it. What was easier than to institute a prosecution which would enable Mr. Saunders to raise the defence on the proposition of law involved in the debate? We agree in the main with the observations of the Home Secretary, whose speech appeared to be divided into two parts. The first part was one of law, and the second one of facts. The Home Secretary presented to the House, no doubt, a deplorable condition of things, and I am not here, for one moment, to palliate any of the outrages that have resulted from these gatherings. He is but a poor friend of the cause of the people who would attempt to defend any of the outrages that were committed, and he does but little justice to his cause. But this is the answer that I make to my right hon. Friend (Mr. Matthews) with regard to that portion of his case in which he dealt with the facts. These deplorable instances themselves speak more eloquently and cry more loudly for a solution of this question, and make it imperative that this question must be determined one way or the other, whether we regard it from the point of view of the Home Secretary, or from that of the hon. Member for Reading (Mr. Murdoch). Whether we regard either of the pictures drawn by the speakers, so far as the facts are concerned they establish the case in such a way as to call upon the House to deal with the matter, and so dispose of all doubt in connection with it, so that no misapprehensions shall exist either on the part of those who administer the law, or in the minds of those for whom the law is administered. The Attorney General foisted upon the House, if I may use the expression, this proposition—that we are contending in support of my hon. and learned Friend's (Sir Charles Russell's) Motion for the right of public meeting in a public thoroughfare. But we do nothing of the kind; it has never been suggested. No one on this side ever made any such ridiculous contention. My hon. and learned Friend showed that this is not the case of a claim of the right to meet in a thoroughfare. The Home Secretary has argued that the section of the Act of 1844 makes it impossible for any lawyer to contend that Trafalgar Square is not an ordinary street or thoroughfare. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "Things were put up in Trafalgar Square which showed that Parliament contemplated a condition of affairs inconsistent with the dedication of the Square as an ordinary highway, and that it was intended by Parliament that the public should have the use and enjoyment of the Square possibly in a more complete way than they had the use and enjoyment of the Parks."

I agree that it is a thoroughfare, *plus* something else; but I contend that there were rights secured by the public in right of user. That is really the whole of the right hon. Gentleman's case. He admits the right of thoroughfare, and "possibly some greater right," and it is obvious that we on the Opposition side of the House must, for the sake of the people of this Metropolis, and also for the sake of other people in other parts of the country, ascertain what those rights are. We want to know whether there is a right of user or not? We do not know if there is such a right at present, and the Motion of my hon. and learned Friend will, if accepted, afford us an opportunity of ascertaining how far that right exists. Mr. Justice Charles, at the Central Criminal Court, did not speak of Trafalgar Square as a thoroughfare coupled with any rights obtained by user; but, having considered the observations addressed to him, he said—

> "I can find no warrant for telling you that there is a right of public meeting either in Trafalgar Square or any other thoroughfare,"

showing that all the Judges in that case considered the possession of this legality utterly apart from the question of user, and considered it merely from the point of view of a public thoroughfare. How different is that from the position of my hon. and learned Friend, who put forward the user recognized by various Home Secretaries, by the Law Officers of the Crown, and even protected by the police? Surely that is a state of things on which my hon. and learned Friend is justified in relying, and I hope that no Party spirit will prevent hon. Gentlemen from giving an opinion on this matter as presented to the House by my hon. and learned Friend—that is, a question for decision and inquiry, and the sooner that inquiry takes place the better will it be not only for those whose duty it is to administer the law, but for those who are to obey the law.

SIR HENRY JAMES (Bury, Lancashire): I am afraid, Sir, that the House will be somewhat alarmed at the prospect of another lawyer taking part in this debate. I will do my utmost to allay that alarm by dealing as little as possible with that part of the discussion which touches upon the legal aspects of the question. The legal aspects of the question have been placed before us with rare ability by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for South Hackney (Sir Charles Russell), and by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster); but I hope I may be forgiven for saying that there is another point of view which renders thair arguments immaterial. It is that point of view which I shall endeavour to place before the House. The proposition which my hon. and learned Friend the Member for South Hackney put forward in his speech, which was a speech of great moderation, of great discretion as well as of ability, was in substance, though not in words, that the public have the right of meeting—of holding public meetings—in Trafalgar Square. He did not pledge himself to that proposition, but I think he conveyed it to the House so as to justify every layman in fighting behind the shield which he presented. While he did not in words put forward exactly that proposition, he was endeavouring to maintain his position by it. My hon. and learned Friend admits that if this is a legal right even as he has put it forward, it is not a positive right in the ordinary sense of the word that can be enforced. My hon. and learned Friend said he did not question, and never has questioned, the right of the Executive to stop any meeting which they can satisfy any proper tribunal is an unlawful meeting. If you so qualify the right by a rule so laid down, I think we shall be pretty nearly agreed that it is comparatively immaterial whether the strict technical right exists or not. I think that what my hon. and learned Friend meant to put before the House was not that there was a legal right that could be enforced, but that there was a practice grown up that ought not to be arbitrarily dealt with, and that approached to a legal right. The hon. and learned Attorney General has urged to this House a strong argument that there is ownership vested in the Crown, and that the ownership enables the Representative of the Crown, the Executive Government, to treat any persons at their will as trespassers, and to prevent any persons taking part in meetings in the Square. That argument is almost perfectly immaterial in the consideration of this matter. This question of legal ownership may be put forward to-night as an abstract proposition, but it is a right that can only be held in reserve, to be used in circumstances we can scarcely realize, and which have not been put forward in this instance. The police who refused to allow the meetings to take place did not put forward interference with the right of ownership in the Crown, but interference with the right of public safety. That right of protecting public safety my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hackney admits; and to the exercise of that right it is admitted the right or practice—call it which you will—of holding public meetings in the Square is subject. If the action of the Executive Government has been in accordance with the performance of that admitted duty, where is the blame to be attached? The Square is public property. It is to be devoted to public uses and for public purposes; and it is the duty of the Government to see that the public have the use of the Square, and to so regulate it that the rights of the public shall not be interfered with. Even if my hon. and learned Friend could establish the right to hold meetings in the Square, no one knows better than he how the right of every citizen is controlled by the maxim that you must use that which is your own so as not to injure anybody else. A man occupying his own house has a right to indulge in music, or even, if he gives an evening party, to hire a band of music, and let it play all night; but if he follows out that right to the extent of having music for many hours, or at inappropriate hours on many days and nights, so as to interfere with the comfort of his neighbours, a Court of Equity will very soon restrain him in the exercise of his right. So that if the use of the Square be established as a public right, it must not be exercised by one section of the public to the injury or annoyance or exclusion of the rest. During years that had elapsed no doubt a practice of holding public meetings in Trafalgar Square had sprung up, and I admit that user would practically deprive a Government of the right of arbitrary interference. If the Government had come forward and said —"We will have no meetings at all," they must give good reason for so doing. If they had allowed the holding of one meeting which was favourable to their own political views, and forbade the holding of another meeting which was unfavourable to those views, they would not have been able to withstand for one month the pressure of public opinion. But my hon. and learned Friend cannot show that the action of the Government has been influenced by a desire to prevent one particular class of public meetings. The honesty and the honour of Members of this House, to whatever Party they may belong, would denounce a Government which had acted in such a manner. The phrase "unlawful meeting" is an awkward one to use. The sense in which we must employ the words "unlawful meeting" in considering the Resolution now before the House is that the meeting is one which will create fear in the minds of ordinary persons. The meetings before February, 1886, were not so likely to create such fear as to make the Government think it necessary to interfere with them. That meeting, I believe, belongs to no Government, and the responsibility for it attaches to no Government. If I am not mistaken, it took place on the very day of the change of Government, and there was no Home Secretary to bear the responsibility of the measures that were adopted. But it was that meeting which initiated the system of lawlessness that created terror in the minds of honest men. My hon. and learned Friend prosecuted two of the speakers at that meeting who used language, as he alleged, which tended to encourage the men by whom shops were looted and property was destroyed. If there were a reasonable fear of a repetition of these things the meetings became unlawful. While such a state of things occasioned alarm to peaceable subjects of Her Majesty in the Metropolis, it was an attraction to another class who looked forward to a continuance of the meetings in the hope that the scenes of February, 1886, might be repeated. In October, 1887, we came to a condition of things which could never be tolerated in any country where civilization existed. On this subject I do not speak from mere hearsay, for I myself witnessed the meetings. My avocation during many days in October last caused me to pass through Trafalgar Square. There were some honest enthusiasts who endeavoured to explain before a limited audience their views on political and social topics, but there was a large and an organized crowd which gathered round these few speakers and these few listeners. It was not the orators and their audiences, it was not the Army, but their camp followers who were the dangerous persons. They conducted themselves in such a way as to render it unsafe for any woman or child to pass across Trafalgar Square. Indeed, it was dangerous for the strongest man to go there. The crowd were looking forward to an opportunity for breaking through the police and performing acts of destruction, of robbery, and of riot. Of course, people have a right to pass and repass through the Square, and if they were prevented from so doing in consequence of meetings being held there daily, it became the imperative duty of the Government to interfere on behalf of all peaceful subjects, because this property was public property. The interference of the Government became a duty, the neglect of which would have brought upon them deserved censure. It was the bounden duty of the Government to prevent the continuance of a state of things which every time it recurred would produce reasonable fear in the minds of ordinary persons. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for South Hackney admitted that the meeting of the 13th November was unlawful, and that the Government acted rightly in stopping it. He did so in most distinct terms. What, then, is the point on which he relies in order to censure the Government? He says that the notice was general, and not particular and specific, and he urges that Sir Charles Warren ought not to have declared, as he did, that until further notice a meeting should not be held. But, after all, this is a practical and not a lawyer's question. If you have to deal with an unlawful meeting of the character I have described, you must stop it in advance. If, on behalf of the community, you are entitled to prevent an unlawful meeting, you must do it by anticipation. If you do not a collision must occur, and you accentuate and do not prevent the evil you fear. The condition of things at that time was that if for one day permission had been given to hold a meeting it would have been attended by all the camp followers, who came there merely for the purpose of disturbance. If that general notice had not been given the whole of the mischief which the Government were striving to prevent would have been produced. Upon Sir Charles Warren rested the responsibility of determining whether things were to continue as they had been going on, and he took the only practical course that could be taken. Let me say a word on the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), who, though he disparaged a resort to a bare legal argument of this question, suggested that the proper course to have pursued would have been to serve a writ of intrusion. I wonder what those who were served with this writ would have done with it. What satisfaction would it have been to the men whose property was at stake every hour of the day? I cannot help, however, referring to one sentence of the right hon. Gentleman for which many men will heartily thank him. I keep a debtor and creditor account of my right hon. Friend's sayings, and though the balance is at present much to his debit, yet this saying I will put down to his credit without deduction and without discount—that he would not join in any attack on the police. Everyone will recognize the loyal spirit in which that was said. The right hon. Gentleman himself knows the devotion of the police to their duty, and he knows how that duty is performed. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for York (Mr. Lockwood) says that he and his Friends separate themselves entirely from those who create disorder. But they cannot if these disturbances take place. The police themselves cannot separate those who create disorder from those who do not, if these meetings take place. Those who have the conduct of these meetings do nothing, let it be admitted, to encourage riot and disorder and disturbance; but these are the inevitable consequences of such meetings. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for South Hackney asked what is to be done, and whether the right of public meeting in Trafalgar Square is ever to be restored? I hope we may be able to go back to the old state of things; but it will not be reached until a loyal support is given to those who have to keep the peace, and until every discouragement is given to those who break the law, especially by those who bear high responsibility, who had better cease to bring forward ambiguous Motions which may mean anything, and may mislead many. It was remarkable that my hon. and learned Friend who brought forward this Motion forgot to point out what kind of "inquiry" he wanted. My right hon. Friend the Member for Derby was a little more explicit, and he said that the inquiry was wanted to determine what number of places are open for the purposes of public meeting. I can tell him. They are exactly the same number as were open for public meeting when he was Home Secretary. If the same conditions as exist now had existed when he was Home Secretary, the number would have been exactly the same. If those who now demand that Trafalgar Square shall be open for public meeting could guarantee that order shall be maintained, the same number of places will be open as when the right hon. Gentleman was Home Secretary. He has endeavoured to cast responsibility for what took place in 1881 upon others beside himself. It is certainly an inconvenient practice to refer to advice which he received from the Law Officers of the Crown, advice which has never been made public, which he discloses from memory, and advice which was given on a case which he has not mentioned to the House. I will warrant that if that opinion was signed by Sir Farrer Herschell it was quite right; but, as far as I am entitled to surmise, the question submitted to us may not have referred to the disturbance of the public peace. It may have been a question as to stopping access to the House of Commons. How, then, has that opinion any bearing on the question as to the meeting in Trafalgar Square on the 13th of November, when, admittedly, the public peace was gravely disturbed. and when my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hackney admits an unlawful meeting was held? There is another aspect of the question on which I should like to touch. We are now face to face with a problem as great and as grave as any that ever existed in any country—the problem that has arisen owing to the rapid increase of the population, which is year by year imposing new duties on the Government and new anxieties upon the Executive. That growth of population has caused large numbers to drift into the large towns, and especially into the centre of all—the Metropolis. Year by year the number of unemployed men in the Metropolis is thereby being increased, men to whom every sympathy should be extended, but who make demands which we who have not felt the sharp pangs of hunger can scarcely understand. Of one thing be certain—that the worst place for solving this great problem will be the streets of London, and that there are no means by which it will be so dangerous to attempt to solve it as by means of conflicts with the armed power of the law; and, Sir, I say that those who now by Motion, by action, and by their votes encourage these men—who ought to be guided and not incited—to attempt to meet unrestrained and uncontrolled by law, are bringing on and are hastening events that will create disorders which will end in disasters, and the responsibility for which I, for one, will take no part in bearing.

Mr. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.) said, that although he did not claim, like the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings), to know what people thought, he should like, with the leave of the House, to endeavour to justify his conduct and that of the people of London in the events which had occurred during the last four months. He wished to free the people from the aspersions cast upon them of being revolutionary. He looked upon those events as being important rather in their social than in their political aspects. They had had some ingenious and eloquent speeches from the lawyers on both sides of the House. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James)—in a nice piece of special pleading—put the question before them from his point of view; but while he was tearing his passion to tatters, he could not but remember that the right hon. and learned Gentleman had been accustomed to impart passion and pathos into his speeches all the days of his life, according as his brief was marked 50 or 500. The right hon. and learned Gentleman had challenged any man in the House to be the guarantee for public order and peace, were a meeting held in Trafalgar Square. It was a curious thing that Her Majesty's Government were unable to answer for peace and order; but he (Mr. Graham) relied so much upon the law-abiding qualities of the working population of London that he would endeavour, were he allowed to do so by the Government, to hold a meeting in Trafalgar Square, and, as a private man, if riot or damage ensued, he would pay for it with his person, or in any way the Government might think fit. He had some little right to be heard on this question. For what he considered his duty he was beaten and assaulted in the sight of London. He was put to great inconvenience and expense, and he had to serve a month's imprisonment. [*Laughter, and cries cf* "We have him to keep the people in order!"] He could tell right hon. Gentlemen who laughed at the poor that the people of London looked at the question from a vastly different aspect. Was it wonderful that the people of London did not attach the same importance to legal argument that that House was disposed to attach to it? What did the proletariat of London know of the legal aspect of the question? They had seen what they considered, rightly or wrongly, right turned against them. They had seen themselves beaten down on a place where they thought they had the right to assemble for merely expressing that right which their fathers had exercised for 40 years. Would they have been worthy to be called Englishmen had they failed to remonstrate? Was it wonderful that a little bitterness had been imported into their speeches and remonstrances, when they had seen, as he had done, the the women and children beaten down by police? In dealing with the conduct of the police, it would ill befit him to make an attack upon them. He did not intend to do so. A policeman was a man to be pitied. Surely a man who lived execrated amongst his fellows was an object to be pitied. He deplored not the conduct of the police, but of those who set them on. He would attack not even the Government, but the social system that had forced the best of our young men into the police and the best of our young women into the streets. In the future Government would have to pay their janissaries better, or else they would not be able to recruit them from the people of England when they came to apprehend the duties that the acceptance of the blood money entailed upon them. There was one point, however, which he considered totally indefensible on the part of the Government, and that was why, during the long, useless guard on the 13th November, the police were kept on the Square without food or refreshment? There was a design in that—the design being deliberately to create a feeling of hatred between the police and the people. If that was the design of the Government they had succeeded — [*laughter, and cries of* "We are glad of it!"]—and, having sown the wind, it was not his fault if perchance they reaped the whirlwind. If the temper of the Government was to laugh at the sufferings of the poor of London, and to suppress all free speech there as they were endeavouring to do in Ireland, he deplored it, and he deplored it as a partizan of law and order, because free speech was their only safety-valve for so large and dense a population as that of London. The inevitable result would be that secret societies would be formed here, as in Russia, and he would be the first to deplore that. Hon. Gentlemen need not flatter themselves that the same spirit of hatred that was growing up betwixt class and class in Russia was not growing up here in England. He appealed to anyone who had followed the social and political movements of the day to say that the proletariat of London was not as well able to judge upon social circumstances as the proletariat of Russia. They were not deceived by phrases. They estimated a cheat upon the Stock Exchange and the Turf with the habitual criminals in our gaols, and they failed to see the difference between the titled whore of Belgravia and the poor prostitute of Regent Street, except as regarded sympathy and censure. And when they saw such a bitter spirit of hatred at work—and it was at work—he would put it to them whether it was safe to shut up the only safety-valve that was left to the people—that, namely, of expressing their feelings in public meeting? The Government had endeavoured to confuse the issue by representing the working men's clubs as bodies of revolutionaries and organized plunderers. He indignantly denied it, and would assert that if they had not been interfered with the meeting would have been as orderly and legal as any meeting that was ever held in the Square. He did not wish to say that the trial and sentence passed upon him was not a perfectly fair and legal one from the Judge's point of view; but it required more than a finding of a Judge and jury to lay at rest for ever the question of free meeting in the capital of the British Empire. He had been tried on three counts—assault on the police, causing a riot, and illegal assembly; but the good sense and honesty of a British jury acquitted him instantly on the counts of assault and riot; therefore, he failed to see how any fair-minded man could come forward with the stale argument of a riot having been caused either by his action or that of the working men of London. What sort of riot could it be when 60,000 men were to have assembled, and all the properties which the hon. and learned Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) could produce in Court were two pokers, a piece of iron in paper, and a piece of wood with nails in it? That was a formidable array of weapons with which to subvert the British Constitution. There was an illegal assembly, however, and that was the assembly of 4,000 police and soldiery in the middle of the Metropolis, for no adequate reason, and in times of high peace. That there was no bloodshed or damage to property was not the result of the Government's action, but of the good conduct, the good temper, and the self-denial of the people under great provocation. But the real question was not touched at his trial, and the Government had not raised it in Mr. Saunders's case, because he presumed they thought they had no chance of succeeding. Why had he not been allowed to raise the question in a legal way? He had hitherto had no opportunity of defending himself in that House; but he would now, in the little time left him, endeavour to show that there was no other course open to him than that which he had pursued. He totally denied that his meeting had any connection with those that went before. It seemed to him that the objection to his meeting arose from the fear of the Government that in London there would be a large vote of sympathy passed with one of the most prominent victims of their Irish administration. He challenged anyone to say what Statute or unwritten law he broke on that occasion. He was found guilty of the obsolete offence of illegal assembly. He admitted it was bad taste of the people of London to parade their insolent starvation in the face of the rich and trading portions of the town. They should have starved in their garrets, as he had no doubt many Members of Her Majesty's Government and most of the upper classes would have wished them to do. [*Cries of* "Order!" *and* "Divide!"] He was not in the habit of asking for mercy at the hands of any man; but the masses of the City of London looked to the Speaker for justice on this occasion. They looked to him to let him (Mr. Cunninghame Graham), their advocate, lay their case before the House; and he appealed to the Speaker now, and he knew he should not appeal in vain. The son of him who gave the people free bread would not deny their Representative free speech, at least in Parliament. It had been charged against him that he had stirred up a lot of ignorant men to dash their heads against a wall. It had been charged against him that he had spoken sedition, and that he was a revolutionary. If to be revolutionary was to wish to ameliorate the condition of the poor of this City, to wish for a more democratic form of government, to wish that Members of Parliament should be paid for their services, to wish to pass Liberal measures of a similar nature, then he was a revolutionary. It had also been urged that he had stirred up men to break the law. That was an absolute and foundationless calumny. He would not ask for any more indulgence from that House, but would thank them for the courteous way in which they had listened to a man struggling with weakness endeavouring to place before them what he considered a more serious aspect of a Constitutional question; and he would only renew the pledge he had given before in public, but in no spirit of challenge to this House, and no spirit of disrespect to the Speaker, that a time would come—he said it with confidence, certainly being able to fulfil his pledge—when he would hold a meeting of as many men as Trafalgar Square would contain, and when the Government of the country, no matter whether Whig or Tory—so greatly should public opinion have developed by that time—would be but too glad to assist him in keeping law and order on that occasion.

MR. MATTHEWS (who was received with loud and prolonged cries of "Divide!" and "Spoken!" from the Radical and Home Rule Members) said, that he wished to speak on the Amendment of the junior Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh), who had made certain charges against the police of assaulting and maltreating persons after they were in custody. But he only mentioned one case in which evidence of assault was adduced in Court—namely, the case of the man Rogers, who, according to the evidence of an Inspector, was struck by a constable, and was brought before Mr. Partridge at Westminster. All the other cases had been privately communicated to the hon. Member, and he (Mr. Matthews) could not help protesting against this mode of attacking members of a responsible force. All the men who were said by the hon. Member to have been maltreated by the police had appeared before magistrates; but in only one case—that of Rogers—was any complaint made.

MR. BRADLAUGH said, that the case of another man was also mentioned in Court. [*Loud cries of* "Name!"] He had not the papers containing the name with him then, having taken the bundle downstairs some hours ago, but he would undertake to make good his statement before a Committee of that House.

MR. MATTHEWS said, that while these matters were fresh, they had not been brought to the notice of the authorities, and they had only now been produced for a particular purpose. As he said, since these proceedings, he had sat day by day, and no complaint had reached him at the Home Office. Had any charge of maltreatment, supported even by a shadow of *primâ facie* evidence, been brought before him, he would at once have ordered an inquiry by the Commissioners of Police or instituted a prosecution. He might tell the hon. Member for Northampton that the policeman implicated in the case of Rogers had been called upon to resign, and was no longer a member of the force. He protested against the police having such charges brought against them in the House suddenly and without Notice, when the hon. Member for Northampton had weeks and months in which he might have brought them before a magistrate, or before the High Court of Justice, in the shape of an action, or in the shape of a complaint to the Home Office, where they could have been investigated. And he pledged himself even now, if the hon. Member would bring a *primâ facie* case of misconduct against the police, the matter would be taken up and thoroughly inquired into by the Director of Public Prosecutions. [MR. BRADLAUGH said he undertook to furnish evidence.] There was another allegation he would reply to. The hon. Member for North-West Lanarkshire (Mr. Cunninghame Graham) had alleged that there was a design on the part of the Government to produce hatred between the police and the public; and the hon. Member for Dundee (Mr. Firth) had said that the conduct and management of the police had been such as to induce the working men of London to withdraw their help from the preservation of law and order. He (Mr. Matthews) denied those allegations as directly and absolutely as possible. It was not the Government who desired to produce ill-will between the police and the people of the Metropolis. He did not believe that such a feeling existed; but he believed that the really honest working men of the Metropolis had as much confidence in the police as they ever had before. He (Mr. Matthews) warned hon. Gentlemen who professed to be the special and peculiar Representatives of the democracy, that they were entering on a most dangerous path when they made so broadly those accusations against those who were only the servants of the public and the defenders of the law. It was in that manner that liberties perished in a democracy; and no course could be more perilous to the public weal than to try to inflame the minds of the people against the guardians of public order, and to scatter unsupported charges broadcast against them. The Government had been condemned by the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) for forbidding all meetings in Trafalgar Square. He (Mr. Matthews) would wish to rest the defence of their conduct in that respect on the eloquent speech of the right hon. and learned Member for Bury (Sir Henry James). The Government could not pretend to pick and choose between one meeting and another. The interests of public order required that that chronic malady of disorder near Trafalgar Square should be checked. How could they say with confidence that one meeting would be safe and another dangerous? The only possible and prudent course was to forbid all meetings. Those who said their design was to prevent free speech in the Metropolis forgot that meetings at that very time were going on in Hyde Park and other parts of London unchecked and even protected. It never had been the desire of the Government to interfere with free speech, nor in anything they had done had they any intention of departing from the line which all previous Governments had followed—namely, that of non-interference with public meetings in any place where neither obstruction nor disorder was anticipated.

Sir CHARLES RUSSELL, in reply, said, it now seemed that the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary was content to rest the justification for the stoppage of all meetings in Trafalgar Square, and of all processions in its neighbourhood, on the defence offered for the Government by the right hon. and learned Member for Bury (Sir Henry James). If so, it was uncommonly hard on the Home Secretary himself, and still more so on the Attorney General. What was the line of defence taken by the right hon. and learned Member for Bury? He began by admitting—and he (Sir Charles Russell) thanked him for it—that in the case of Trafalgar Square there had been a long uninterrupted user, for a great many years by the people of the Metropolis, of the Square as a place of public meeting, and that that right had been practically exercised—he (Sir Charles Russell) was now using the word "right" not in the strict legal sense of the term —with the recognition and sanction of the Home Secretary of the day, the police, and the authorities of the time. And the conclusion which his right hon. and learned Friend drew, and drew rightly, from those premises was that a user so recognized and sanctioned and so uninterrupted gave a right which might be a right with an imperfect sanction attached to it, but nevertheless was a right which his right hon. and learned Friend would allow to be one properly describable as in the nature of a Constitutional right. His right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bury went further, for he admitted that it was such a right as no Government could venture to interfere with by arbitrary action. Those were important admissions, because it gave the go-by to almost all those arguments which they had had urged upon them, from a legal point of view during the debate, of which they had heard so much about, the Square being the private property of the Crown, so that those who went there without the leave of its Representatives were guilty of trespass; it gave the go-by also to the ground of obstruction being alleged as a reason against the holding of meetings in Trafalgar Square. If the Government had come down and said they fairly admitted there had been a right—it might be of imperfect sanction but still a right exercised by the people and recognized by authority—but that they had had to interfere with it in a particular and definite case in the interest of the public, which they themselves thought sufficient in exceptional circumstances, he and those on his side of the House might have taken a different view of the matter, though not perhaps agreeing with the contention of the Government. But up to that moment the attitude of the Government was one of absolute denial of any Constitutional or legal right on the part of the public to the user of the Square, whether of perfect or imperfect sanction, and the assertion of the right of the Executive Government on legal as well as Constitutional grounds, when they pleased and as long as they pleased, and with or without special reason or justification, to put a stop to all meetings in the Square. The hon. and learned Attorney General had blamed him for an omission of reference to an Act which, in the judgment of his hon. and learned Friend had some bearing on the public or private character of the Square. Now, certainly he had not seen the Statute alluded to, but having now seen it, he said that if he had seen it before, he would not have mentioned it, becuuse in his judgment, it had no bearing whatever on the matter. The simple reason was, that that Act contemplated a possibility which did not become a fact—namely, that the Crown would pay the money advanced in connection with Trafalgar Square; but inasmuch as that fact was never given effect to, and inasmuch as the Act of 1844 declared that Trafalgar Square had been acquired, formed, and embellished at the public expense, he was content to rest on that allegation that it was in all senses of the word public, and not private property. He had been blamed for not referring to the conduct of the police. But he had expressly stated in his speech that he made no reference to the police conduct in the matter. He desired, however, to say now, what he had said publicly, that the police had onerous and responsible duties to perform, that they deserved the sympathy and the support of the public in the performance of those duties, but that just in proportion as their duties were responsible and their power over and in connection with the people great, so was it important that their powers should be properly exercised. He repudiated the suggestion that when it was urged on *primâ facie* grounds that there ought to be an inquiry into the conduct of the police, that that was an attack on the police. It was not so regarded when Lord Palmerston assented to such an inquiry in the case cited by the junior Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh), nor on the occasion when the present Government set at work a Royal Commission to inquire into the Belfast Riots. The ground upon which the present inquiry was suggested was, that imputations had been made in very many quarters and in a great many instances, applying to many parts of the Metropolis and not to Trafalgar Square alone, of acts of violence on the part of the police, for which the allegation was that there was no justification. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Matthews) said that if any such cases were brought to his notice he would take prompt measures and direct a prosecution. But his right hon. Friend forgot that in a great number of these cases there was not, and there could not be, identification of the particular men guilty of the violence. The inquiry wanted was one into the general conduct of a not inconsiderable number of police, in order that the force of public opinion, if they were found to be guilty of this conduct, might reassure the public mind, and teach the police the lesson that while in the discharge of their duties every allowance was to be made for them and every sympathy extended to them; if there had been an excess in the exercise of their power and unnecessary violence in the discharge of their duty, it was the obligation of the House of Commons and of those responsible for the peace of the country to see that that violence should be checked and punished.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): Mr. Speaker——

MR. W. H. SMITH rose in his place, and claimed to move "That the Question be now put."

Question, "That the Question be now put," put accordingly, and *agreed to.*

Question put, "That those words be there added."

The House *divided:*—Ayes 207; Noes 322: Majority 115.—(Div. List, No. 26.)

MR. W. H. SMITH claimed to move "That the Main Question be now put."

Main Question put accordingly,

The House *divided:*—Ayes 224; Noes 316: Majority 92.

AYES.

Abraham, W. (Glam.)
Abraham, W. (Limerick, W.)
Acland, A. H. D.
Acland, C. T. D.
Allison, R. A.
Anderson, C. H.
Asquith, H. H.
Atherley-Jones, L.
Austin, J.
Balfour, rt. hon. J. B.
Ballantine, W. H. W.
Barbour, W. B.
Barran, J.
Barry, J.
Biggar, J. G.
Blane, A.
Bolton, J. C.
Bolton, T. D.
Bradlaugh, C.
Bright, W. L.
Broadhurst, H.
Brown, A. L.
Bruce, hon. R. P.
Brunner, J. T.
Bryce, J.
Buchanan, T. R.
Burt, T.
Buxton, S. C.
Byrne, G. M.
Caine, W. S.
Cameron, C.
Cameron, J. M.
Campbell, Sir G.
Campbell, H.
Campbell-Bannerman, right hon. H.
Carew, J. L.
Causton, R. K.
Cavan, Earl of
Chamberlain, R.
Channing, F. A.

Childers, right hon. H. C. E.
Clancy, J. J.
Clark, Dr. G. B.
Cobb, H. P.
Coleridge, hon. B.
Colman, J. J.
Commins, A.
Condon, T. J.
Conway, M.
Corbet, W. J.
Cossham, H.
Cox, J. R.
Cozens-Hardy, H. H.
Craven, J.
Crawford, D.
Cremer, W. R.
Crilly, D.
Crossley, E.
Deasy, J.
Dillon, J.
Dillwyn, L. L.
Dodds, J.
Ellis, J.
Ellis, J. E.
Ellis, T. E.
Esslemont, P.
Evershed, S.
Farquharson, Dr. R.
Fenwick, C.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro-
Finucane, J.
Firth, J. F. B.
Foley, P. J.
Forster, Sir C.
Foster, Sir W. B.
Fox, Dr. J. F.
Fry, T.
Fuller, G. P.
Gane, J. L.
Gardner, H.
Gaskell, C. G. Milnes-
Gill, T. P.
Gladstone, right hon. W. E.
Gladstone, H. J.
Gourley, E. T.
Graham, R. C.
Gray, E. D.
Grey, Sir E.
Gully, W. C.
Haldane, R. B.
Hanbury-Tracy, hon. F. S. A.
Harrington, E.
Harrington, T. C.
Harris, M.
Hayden, L. P.
Hayne, C. Seale-
Hingley, B.
Hooper, J.
Howell, G.
Hoyle, I.
Hunter, W. A.
Illingworth, A.
Jacoby, J. A.
Joicey, J.
Jordan, J.
Kay-Shuttleworth, rt. hon. Sir U. J.
Kenny, C. S.
Kenny, J. E.
Kilbride, D.
Lalor, R.
Lawson, Sir W.
Lawson, H. L. W.
Leahy, J.
Leake, R.
Lefevre, right hon. J. G. S.
Lewis, T. P.
Lockwood, F.
Lyell, L.
Macdonald, W. A.
MacInnes, M.
M'Arthur, A.
M'Arthur, W. A.
M'Cartan, M.
M'Carthy, J.
M'Carthy, J. H.
M'Donald, P.
M'Donald, Dr. R.
M'Ewan, W.
M'Lagan, P.
M'Laren, W. S. B.
Mahony, P.
Maitland, W. F.
Mappin, Sir F. T.
Mayne, T.
Menzies, R. S.
Montagu, S.
Morgan, right hon. G. O.
Morgan, O. V.
Morley, rt. hon. J.
Mundella, right hon. A. J.
Murphy, W. M.
Neville, R.
Newnes, G.
Nolan, Colonel J. P.
Nolan, J.
O'Brien, J. F. X.
O'Brien, P.
O'Brien, P. J.
O'Brien, W.
O'Connor, A.
O'Connor, J.
O'Connor, T. P.
O'Hanlon, T.
O'Kelly, J.
Palmer, Sir C. M.
Parker, C. S.
Parnell, C. S.
Paulton, J. M.
Pease, A. E.
Pease, H. F.
Pickard, B.
Pickersgill, E. H.
Picton, J. A.
Pinkerton, J.
Playfair, rt. hon. Sir L.
Plowden, Sir W. C.
Portman, hon. E. B.
Power, P. J.
Price, T. P.
Priestley, B.
Quinn, T.
Rathbone, W.
Redmond, W. H. K.
Reed, Sir E. J.
Reid, R. T.
Rendel, S.
Richard, H.
Roberts, J.
Robertson, E.
Roe, T.
Roscoe, Sir H. E.
Rowlands, J.
Rowlands, W. B.
Rowntree, J.
Russell, Sir C.
Samuelson, Sir B.
Samuelson, G. B.
Schwann, C. E.
Sheehan, J. D.
Simon, Sir J.
Slagg, J.
Smith, S.
Spencer, hon. C. R.
Stack, J.
Stanhope, hon. P. J.
Stansfeld, right hon. J.
Stevenson, F. S.
Stevenson, J. C.
Stewart, H.
Stuart, J.
Sullivan, D.
Summers, W.
Sutherland, A.
Swinburne, Sir J.
Tanner, C. K.
Thomas, A.
Trevelyan, right hon. Sir G. O.
Tuite, J.
Vivian, Sir H. H.
Wallace, R.
Wardle, H.
Warmington, C. M.
Watt, H.
Wayman, T.
Whitbread, S.
Will, J. S.
Williams, A. J.
Williamson, S.
Wilson, C. H.
Wilson, H. J.
Winterbotham, A. B.
Woodall, W.
Woodhead, J.
Wright, C.

TELLERS.

Flower, C.
Morley, A.

NOES.

Addison, J. E. W.
Agg-Gardner, J. T.
Ainslie, W. G.
Aird, J.
Allsopp, hon. P.
Ambrose, W.
Amherst, W. A. T.
Anstruther, H. T.
Ashmead-Bartlett, E.
Baden-Powell, Sir G S.
Bailey, Sir J. R.
Baird, J. G. A.
Balfour, rt. hon. A. J.
Banes, Major G. E.
Baring, T. C.
Baring, Viscount
Barnes, A.
Barry, A. H. Smith-
Bartley, G. C. T.
Barttelot, Sir W. B.
Bass, H.
Bates, Sir E.
Baumann, A. A.
Beach, right hon. Sir M. E. Hicks-
Beach, W. W. B.
Beadel, W. J.
Beckett, W.
Bentinck, rt. hn. G. C.
Bentinck, Lord H. C.
Bentinck, W. G. C.
Beresford, Lord C. W. De la Poer
Bethell, Commander G. R.
Bickford-Smith, W.
Biddulph, M.
Bigwood, J.
Birkbeck, Sir E.
Blundell, Col. H. B. H.
Bond, G. H.
Bonsor, H. C. O.
Boord, T. W.
Borthwick, Sir A.
Bridgeman, Col. hon. F. C.
Bristowe, T. L.
Brodrick, hon. W. St. J. F.
Brookfield, A. M.
Brooks, Sir W. C.
Bruce, Lord H.
Burdett-Coutts, W. L. Ash.-B.
Burghley, Lord
Caldwell, J.
Campbell, J. A.
Cavendish, Lord E.
Chaplin, right hon. H.
Charrington, S.
Churchill, rt. hn. Lord R. H. S.
Clarke, Sir E. G.
Cochrane-Baillie, hon. C. W. A. N.
Coddington, W.
Coghill, D. H.
Collings, J.
Colomb, Capt. J. C. R.
Commerell, Adml. Sir J. E.
Compton, F.
Corbett, A. C.
Corbett, J.
Corry, Sir J. P.
Cotton, Capt. E. T. D.
Cross, H. S.
Crossman, Gen. Sir W.
Cubitt, right hon. G.
Currie, Sir D.
Curzon, Viscount
Curzon, hon. G. N.
Dalrymple, Sir C.
Darling, C. J.
Davenport, H. T.
Davenport, W. B.
Dawnay, Colonel hon. L. P.
De Cobain, E. S. W.

De Lisle, E. J. L. M. P.
De Worms, Baron H.
Dickson, Major A. G.
Dimsdale, Baron R.
Dixon, G.
Dixon-Hartland, F. D.
Donkin, R. S.
Dorington, Sir J. E.
Dugdale, J. S.
Duncan, Colonel F.
Duncombe, A.
Dyke, right hon. Sir W. H.
Edwards-Moss, T. C.
Egerton, hon. A. de T.
Elcho, Lord
Elliot, hon. A. R. D.
Elliot, hon. H. F. H.
Elliot, Sir G.
Elliot, G. W.
Ellis, Sir J. W.
Elton, C. I.
Ewing, Sir A. O.
Eyre, Colonel H.
Farquharson, H. R.
Feilden, Lieut.-Gen. R. J.
Fellowes, A. E.
Fergusson, right hon. Sir J.
Field, Admiral E.
Fielden, T.
Finch, G. H.
Finlay, R. B.
Fisher, W. H.
Fitzgerald, R. U. P.
Fitzwilliam, hon. W. H. W.
Fitzwilliam, hon. W. J. W.
Fitz-Wygram, General Sir F. W.
Fletcher, Sir H.
Folkestone, right hon. Viscount
Forwood, A. B.
Fowler, Sir R. N.
Fraser, General C. C.
Fry, L.
Fulton, J. F.
Gardner, R. Richardson-
Gathorne-Hardy, hon. A. E.
Gedge, S.
Gent-Davis, R.
Giles, A.
Gilliat, J. S.
Goldsworthy, Major-General W. T.
Gorst, Sir J. E.
Goschen, right hon. G. J.
Gray, C. W.
Green, Sir E.
Grenall, Sir G.
Grimston, Viscount
Grotrian, F. B.
Gunter, Colonel R.
Hall, C.
Halsey, T. F.
Hambro, Col. C. J. T.
Hamilton, right hon. Lord G. F.
Hamilton, Lord E.
Hamilton, Col. C. E.
Hamley, Gen. Sir E. B.
Hankey, F. A.
Hardcastle, F.
Hartington, Marq. of
Hastings, G. W.
Havelock-Allan, Sir H. M.
Heath, A. R.
Heathcote, Capt. J. H. Edwards-
Heaton, J. H.
Herbert, hon. S.
Hermon-Hodge, R. T.
Hervey, Lord F.
Hill, right hon. Lord A. W.
Hill, Colonel E. S.
Hill, A. S.
Hoare, E. B.
Hoare, S.
Hobhouse, H.
Houldsworth, Sir W. H.
Howard, J.
Howorth, H. H.
Hozier, J. H. C.
Hubbard, E.
Hughes, Colonel E.
Hughes-Hallett, Col. F. C.
Hulse, E. H.
Hunt, F. S.
Hunter, Sir W. G.
Isaacs, L. H.
Isaacson, F. W.
Jackson, W. L.
James, rt. hon. Sir H.
Jarvis, A. W.
Jeffreys, A. F.
Jennings, L. J.
Johnston, W.
Kelly, J. R.
Kennaway, Sir J. H.
Kenrick, W.
Kenyon, hon. G. T.
Kerans, F. H.
Kimber, H.
King, H. S.
King-Harman, right hon. Colonel E. R.
Knatchbull-Hugessen, H. T.
Knightley, Sir R.
Knowles, L.
Lafone, A.
Lambert, C.
Laurie, Colonel R. P.
Lawrence, Sir J. J. T.
Lawrance, J. C.
Lawrence, W. F.
Lea, T.
Lees, E.
Legh, T. W.
Leighton, S.
Lewisham, right hon. Viscount
Llewellyn, E. H.
Long, W. H.
Low, M.
Lowther, hon. W.
Lymington, Viscount
Macdonald, right hon. J. H. A.
Mackintosh, C. F.
Maclean, F. W.
Maclean, J. M.
Maclure, J. W.
M'Calmont, Captain J.
Madden, D. H.
Makins, Colonel W. T.
Malcolm, Col. J. W.
Mallock, R.
Maple, J. B.
March, Earl of
Marriott, right hon. W. T.
Maskelyne, M. H. N. Story-
Matthews, right hon. H.
Mattinson, M. W.
Maxwell, Sir H. E.
Mayne, Admiral R. C.
Mills, hon. C. W.
More, R. J.
Morrison, W.
Moss, R.
Mount, W. G.
Mowbray, rt. hon. Sir J. R.
Mowbray, R. G. C.
Mulholland, H. L.
Muncaster, Lord
Muntz, P. A.
Murdoch, C. T.
Newark, Viscount
Noble, W.
Norris, E. S.
Northcote, hon. Sir H. S.
Norton, R.
O'Neill, hon. R. T.
Paget, Sir R. H.
Parker, hon. F.
Pearce, Sir W.
Pelly, Sir L.
Penton, Captain F. T.
Plunket, right hon. D. R.
Powell, F. S.
Price, Captain G. E.
Puleston, Sir J. H.
Quilter, W. C.
Raikes, rt. hon. H. C.
Rankin, J.
Rasch, Major F. C.
Reed, H. B.
Ridley, Sir M. W.
Ritchie, right hon. C. T.
Robertson, J. P. B.
Robinson, B.
Rollit, Sir A. K.
Rothschild, Baron F. J. de
Round, J.
Royden, T. B.
Russell, Sir G.
Russell, T. W.
Salt, T.
Sandys, Lieut-Col. T. M.
Saunderson, Colonel E. J.
Sellar, A. C.
Selwin-Ibbetson, right hon. Sir H. J.
Selwyn, Capt. C. W.
Seton-Karr, H.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H.
Sidebotham, J. W.
Sidebottom, T. H.
Sidebottom, W.
Sinclair, W. P.
Smith, rt. hon. W. H.
Smith, A.
Spencer, J. E.
Stanhope, rt. hon. E.
Stanley, E. J.
Stephens, H. C.
Stewart, M. J.
Sutherland, T.
Talbot, J. G.
Taylor, F.
Temple, Sir R.
Thorburn, W.
Tollemache, H. J.
Tomlinson, W. E. M.
Trotter, H. J.
Vernon, hon. G. R.
Vincent, C. E. H.
Walsh, hon. A. H. J.
Waring, Colonel T.
Watson, J.
Webster, Sir R. E.
Webster, R. G.
West, Colonel W. C.
Weymouth, Viscount
Wharton, J. L.
White, J. B.
Whitley, E.
Whitmore, C. A.
Wiggin, H.
Wilson, Sir S.
Winn, hon. R.
Wodehouse, E. R.
Wolmer, Viscount
Wood, N.
Wortley, C. B. Stuart-
Wright, H. S.
Wroughton, P
Yerburgh, R. A.
Young, C. E. B.

TELLERS.

Douglas, A. Akers-
Walrond, Col. W. H.

PILOTAGE.

Select Committee *appointed* "to consider the position of the Pilotage system of the United Kingdom, with power to send for persons, papers, and records."—(*Sir John Puleston.*)

House adjourned at twenty-five
Minutes before One o'clock
till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 5th March, 1888.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILL—*Second Reading*—Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (1).

ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT (1882) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 1.)

(*The Lord Thurlow.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

LORD THURLOW, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that if he could have had an assurance from the Government that they would be willing to take this matter in hand he would not have troubled their Lordships on the present occasion. He desired their Lordships to regard this question from the point of view of health, of science, of more light, of safety, and of the preservation of property. The object of the Bill was to remove what had proved to be prohibitive restrictions upon an industry which was deserving of every support. The restrictions imposed by the Act of 1882 were certainly most unusual, if not altogether unprecedented, and they had acted very harshly. The President of the Board of Trade, replying last week to a Question in the House of Commons, said that since the passing of the Electric Lighting Act of 1882, 59 provisional orders and five licences had been granted to Companies, and 15 provisional orders and two licences to Local Authorities. The President of the Board of Trade was not aware that in any single case where these powers had been obtained they had been exercised. Such was the crushing effect of the Electric Lighting Act of 1882. Still he wished to say a few words in praise of that measure, which it was the object of this Bill to amend in only one or two small but important particulars. The Act of 1882 was a most elaborate measure for dealing with a then almost unknown science. It successfully prescribed safeguards against dangers which had only since become manifiest, and its object was to impose checks on rash and ill-considered schemes. It now only required trifling amendment to allow the industry to proceed, and he claimed that the time had arrived for action in that direction. In the United States there were 120 electric Light Companies, paying dividends from 6 to 14 per cent. In the German and Austrian Empires there were over 600 local Companies, and in almost every large town in Italy electric lighting was making great progress. It was only in England that the science was comparatively at a standstill, and he hoped that state of things would not be allowed to last much longer. The present time was propitious for several reasons. There never was a time when a larger amount of capital was lying idle, or when there was a larger army of unemployed seeking work and finding none, and by passing this Bill lucrative work might immediately be provided for thousands of men, women, and children. He thought it would not be too much to call upon the Board of Trade to make incandescent electric lighting compulsory in all mines, factories, schools, churches, theatres, hospitals, and other places where human beings congregated together, and where, under existing conditions, gas-jets consumed the lion's share of the oxygen. He ventured to say that when such a demand was made the Government of the day would be neither willing nor able to resist it. Many of their Lordships had no doubt visited factories lighted by gas full of toiling men, women, and children from 6.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m., and had noticed the vitiated state of the atmosphere. The difference between that and a factory lighted by electricity was manifest in a moment. It was like being transported suddenly to another planet. Workmen who had been employed in factories lighted by electricity had told him that nothing short of starvation would induce them to work again in factories lighted by gas. It was the same in the case of mines. Electric lighting would minimize the dangers which now occurred through naked lights or faulty lamps. Then, as to fires in the Metropolis, Captain Shaw's Report showed that the total number of fires in 1887 was 2,363, and no less than 671, or 30 per cent, were directly attributable to causes connected with existing systems of lighting. These figures did not include 691 fires, the origin of which was uncertain, and of these a least 30 per cent might fairly be said to be due to the same cause. Then as to destruction and damage to property. Some of the first tradesmen in London had told him that they had effected great saving since they had substituted the electric light for gas in their show-rooms and shops. It was also well-known that the use of gas was very prejudicial to pictures and books, and the employment of electric light in libraries would be a great advantage. The Bill was precisely similar to the Bill which was passed by this House last Session, and it proposed to extend the licence granted by provisional order to any Company from 21 years to 42 years. The period of 21 years fixed by the present Act was found to be too short and to be insufficient to allow electric lighting companies to recoup themselves. The Board of Trade acceded to this view, and this extension of the life of the provisional order would render the clauses with regard to the terms of purchase of less importance. He would therefore be willing to strike out of the Bill all reference to the purchase of "the goodwill" which, he understood, had hitherto been a stumbling block and a cause of opposition to the Bill. In bringing forward this measure he was solely actuated by a desire for the public interest. There existed at present a great want of employment, and yet, as was well-known, there was a vast amount of capital waiting for investment. His connection with banks enabled him to say that, if the present Act was amended as this Bill proposed, he believed that of the £100,000,000 of capital now lying idle many millions would thereby find useful employment.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª"—(*The Lord Thurlow.*)

THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH said, the Bill did not appear to contain any regulations as to the laying down of the electric cables. At present these lines were growing in number and were being run over everybody's house without the assent or consent of householders, and he thought that it should be defined in any Bill dealing with this subject what the rights of Electric Companies exactly were. There had, so far as he knew, been no decision in the Law Courts upon the point. At present a quantity of telephone wires were to be seen running in every direction in the Metropolis. The cables for electric lighting would be still more dangerous. They would in time become a great nuisance, and if the Acts dealing with electric lighting were silent on the point it would hereafter be said that Parliament had unreservedly conferred on these Companies the right of running these cables over houses as at present. In New York, where electric lighting was more developed than here, the Electric Companies were bound to place their cables underground. If it were found impossible to make a similar provision in this country, still some regulations ought to be made as to the course they should follow so as to prevent them crossing and recrossing public streets as at present.

THE EARL OF CRAWFORD said, he agreed that the Electric Lighting Act required Amendment, but he thought it was desirable, if they were to legislate in the direction of Amending an Act, that they should do so thoroughly, and not simply amend a single clause, which, in his opinion, would effect no good change. Besides, the Act of 1882 was really obsolete so far as the present position of electric lighting was concerned. Where an electrician six years ago would hesitate to supply a place a mile away with light, he would now undertake to supply houses 30 miles off. In 1882, when the first Act was passed, a determination was formed that the promoters of electric lighting schemes should not enjoy a monopoly, and was accordingly resolved that when cables were laid in the streets of any town by an electric company, its work should be purchaseable by the Local Authority. Another provision of the Act laid down that no work should be undertaken by a Company without licence from the Board of Trade, or a special Act, or a provisional order. These two provisions had been fatal to the measure. Licences and provisional orders had been applied for, but no work had been done. He suggested that the promoters of a scheme ought to be allowed to make their own arrangements with the Local Authority. Let the Company pay rent for the use of the streets in which they placed their mains, and let them be absolved from the obligation of supplying light to every corner of a given district when there might be no chance of a reasonable return for their outlay. He looked forward to the day when Companies would be able to lay their cables underground with a good prospect of success; but he asserted that the risks attending exposed electric mains were fewer than the risks which attended either telephone or telegraph wires. When snow fell upon an electric light main it inevitably melted, but it accumulated on other wires with the result that serious accidents were not uncommon. He hoped that the Bill before their Lordships would be read a second time. Hereafter he intended to place before them a Bill of his own, and he hoped that his proposal would have the effect of removing a great many of the disabilities and disadvantages under which the Electric Lighting Companies at present laboured.

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (The Earl of ONSLOW) said, that the Government were not disposed to introduce a Bill upon this matter, because they had already announced a number of measures upon which it was desirable to legislate. They would consider themselves exceedingly fortunate if they were able to carry all those Bills, and they did not consider it wise now to add to the number. The Bill, as explained by the noble Lord opposite, was much less important than it was as printed. There was a long clause in the Bill which repealed some of the provisions of the existing Act; but he understood that when the Bill was considered in Committee the whole of that clause would be withdrawn in order that to the term of 21 years during which Provisional Orders must now run, a further term of 21 years might be added. The Bill, as it was amended, did not appear likely to be productive of great harm, and he was prepared to assent to the second reading on the conditions the noble Lord had suggested. He did not know whether the reason given was the only reason why electric lighting had not been more extensively adopted; but there could be no doubt that public expectation had been greatly disappointed in the matter. We had all hoped that electric lighting would have been much more largely used. Whether it was on account of the limitation in the number of years allowed to Companies and not to the fact that promoters found themselves unable to supply the electric light at prices that would compete with gas, or whether it was on account of difficulties in carrying out the supply of electricity, he did not know; but of this he was certain, that if a small alteration in the law was likely to facilitate the adoption of the electric light in London and other large towns the Government would have no objection to it. He understood the noble Earl behind to intimate that he would introduce another Bill, and if that was the noble Earl's intention it would be well that they should be in possession of both Bills before this one was considered in Committee, and that both should be considered with reference to the provisions of the Bill of the Government dealing with Local Authorities, which would soon be produced in the other House, and which must naturally affect the powers of Local Authorities in this as in other matters.

LORD HERSCHELL said he was not quite sure he understood what it was the Government was prepared to assent to. As far as he could gather, it was that the Act of 1882 was to be amended by substituting 42 years for 21 years. If no other alteration was to be made, he much doubted whether the Bill would have the effect desired. It was very much to be regretted that in this country we had not made the advance in electric lighting which had been made in other parts of the world. He had long desired to avail himself of this important improvement; but he had found it to be utterly impossible, for the reason that the Legislature had put impediments in the way of the spread of this invention which was not put in its way in any other country. He believed that in the South Sea Islands the electric light was more used than it was in London. This was not altogether to our credit. Nobody could suppose that there was not plenty of capital in this country to be invested in this new enterprize, and that there were not plenty of people who would be desirous of availing themselves of it. Why, then, had they not electric lighting in this country to the same extent as on the other side of the Atlantic? There could be only one answer. The terms which had hitherto been imposed on those prepared to undertake the enterprize had been such as to render it impossible for them to obtain the necessary capital. The terms had been made too onerous. He quite sympathized with the desire to prevent undue interference with the control of Local Authorities, and it might be expedient to provide that Local Authorities should ultimately, if they wished, be allowed to become purchasers of electric lighting apparatus, and to supply the electric light as they now supplied gas. He did not personally feel very strongly on that point; but he was not at all sure whether the balance of advantage was not against allowing Municipal Corporations to become trading bodies. With regard to the electric light, there was danger in doing this, because in some cases their conduct might be affected by the fact that they were owners of a gas business, and the electric light would be a serious rival to gas. At all events, the power to acquire apparatus ought to be conferred in such a way as not to cripple the progress of invention and improvement. It was too much to ask the present generation to forego the advantages of electric lighting because their doing so might render it cheaper 30 or 40 years hence. There was no difficulty, he thought, in arriving at a basis of purchase. They had gained experience in India with relation to railway matters. There the Government had been empowered to purchase railways on paying the value as indicated by the average price of shares during the preceding seven years. It had been found that capitalists were prepared to risk capital on these terms, and possibly a similar arrangement might be found satisfactory to the promoters of electric lighting. He would urge the Government to consider whether on some such terms the adoption of electric lighting might be facilitated.

The PRIME MINISTER and SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of Salisbury): I sympathize entirely with the remarks of the noble and learned Lord; but I cannot help remembering that he was a Member of the Government which passed the Act that he has denounced with so much vigour. When I sat exactly where he is sitting now I pleaded in vain for a greater extension of the number of years, and I prophesied the results which have actually occurred. I rather think the noble and learned Lord opposite is imitating those sectaries of the Middle Ages, who went about laying stripes on their own shoulders for the sins they had committed. The noble and learned Lord has held up to our admiration the example of the South Sea Islands in this matter; however, I am too delighted to see that the noble and learned Lord recognizes the difficulty in which we find ourselves to be critical as to the precise means by which his conversion was brought about. It is matter of regret that we have not been able to make a greater use of this invention, considering the vast amount of capital we have at our disposal, and the great need in our smoky towns of diminishing the unconsumed carbon in our atmosphere. Although the Board of Trade has, acting under the guidance of the distinguished statesman who presided over it during the term of Office of the noble and learned Lord, to some extent, I am afraid, since that time, exaggerated the danger of liberty in this matter, it is fair we should remember that we have had very severe lessons in respect of leaving uncontrolled powers to municipalities and public authorities to make binding bargains with trading companies. On the subjects of water and gas we have had very severe lessons, and we are now struggling under the difficulties that have arisen. The noble Viscount near me (Viscount Cross) was said some years ago to have wrecked the Government by the proposals he made for the purchase of the undertakings of the London Water Companies. We now only wish that the proposals which were then denounced could be revived with success and carried into effect. We have bound ourselves by promises to the Water Companies which give them a hold upon us that I do not know we shall ever shake off. Undoubtedly, the price at which this essential article may be furnished must have very considerably affected the progress of sanitary measures so much required in many parts of the Metropolis. We have contrived to make some agreement with the Gas Companies. Twenty years ago we woke up to the fact that we had allowed most improvident agreements to be made with them, that we had allowed them, on the faith of competition which did not exist, to charge enormous prices. At the present moment, in regard to Gas Companies, we are under difficulties which could not have been foreseen by our forefathers when these terms were made, or I am convinced that the measures which they allowed to pass would have been seriously modified. The truth is that in both these cases we have made exceedingly bad bargains, and we are bound by them; and, therefore, it is not wholly unreasonable that in dealing with this new element we should approach it with some amount of caution. I quite believe we may have been too cautious, and may have run into an opposite extreme, and, by hindering the production of the electric light at the cheapest prices, may have prevented the development of this new industry. If the noble and learned Lord can show us that the terms we ask can be reasonably modified, no feeling of self-love will prevent us from making any alteration which your Lordships may think desirable. I think we ought not to be misled by the desire to give the municipalities control over these matters. We have a sufficient number of examples as to the capacity of the municipalities to carry on the business of traders on a large scale. We know the temptations are enormous, and the danger we have to face is not that the municipalities themselves will administer these trading concerns, but that they will be in the hands of paid officers wielding an enormous and irresistible power, exposed to temptations to which the municipalities themselves will not be liable, and at the same time not having the responsibility which rests upon the municipalities. I feel that the whole question of the expediency of giving this power to the municipalities has of late years been too much assumed without sufficient proof, and we should be cautious about surrendering ourselves wholly to them, and preventing that protective competition of private Companies which has proved of so much benefit, and which is so desirable in the interests of the community at large.

The Earl of KIMBERLEY said, he remembered perfectly well that the noble Marquess objected to the Bill of 1882 as being too stringent; but the latter part of the speech of the noble Marquess answered the preceding part, namely, that the Government and the House in 1882 had before them evidence of the previous mistakes that had been made with regard to gas and water legislation. The Board of Trade, which was then presided over by Mr. Chamberlain, was extremely anxious that in the matter of this new invention they should not fall into their former errors. In the discussion on the Bill in 1882 he admitted that it was an experiment, and that they might possibly, by future legislation, be compelled to amend the Bill if they found that they had erred on the side of severity. It was much safer to err on that side than on the side of indulgence. With regard to the municipalities, they undoubtedly ran the risk of having too much officialism; but he would point out that there was likely to be a most severe pressure put upon the ratepayers in the carrying out of improvements, and it was a matter worthy, in his opinion, of very careful consideration whether by giving the municipalities the power to work this large invention, which provided what was, in fact, one of the necessaries of life, they should not be affording them the means of relieving themselves to a considerable extent of the burdens under which they laboured. It was on the whole reasonable, he thought, that the terms in this matter of electric lighting should be made somewhat less stringent.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2^a accordingly.

BRITISH AND OTHER FOREIGN COLONIES—SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS TO NATIVE RACES—CORRESPONDENCE.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

Earl DE LA WARR, in rising to ask, Whether Her Majesty's Government can lay upon the Table of the House further Papers and Correspondence relative to the sale of intoxicating spirits to the Native population in British and other Colonies, especially in the Islands of the Western Pacific and in the Congo and Niger countries of Western Africa; also Papers and Correspondence relating to the Berlin Conference in 1884-5, with regard to an International agreement on the question; also whether any information can be given as regards the prospect of effecting an International agreement? said, that, in a large number of instances where there were British and other settlements engaged in trade with Native races, there was a vast amount of traffic in intoxicating spirits, which was working ruin and destruction to the Natives both morally and physically. He was aware that the subject had been for some time past under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government. He was also aware that attempts had been made to remedy, or at least to check, the evil. At the same time, he knew the difficulties which existed. Other countries besides England were concerned in the matter; but he could hardly think it possible that the Government of any civilized country could be so forgetful of the responsibility resting upon it as not to endeavour to repress an evil which was converting commerce into a degrading and demoralizing agent. On referring to Correspondence which was laid upon the Table of the House in September last year he found a despatch, dated April, 1884, from Mr. Thurston, now Sir John Thurston, Assistant High Commissioner in the Western Pacific. Mr. Thurston says—

> "The nationality of the persons found in charge of trading stations in the Western Pacific or trading from vessels is, as a rule, British, German, French, or American, and it is men subjects of these nations principally who, by the sale of arms, ammunition, and alcohol in its most ardent and poisonous forms, are demoralizing the Natives of the Pacific and bringing about their rapid destruction."

He goes on to speak of the Natives of Samoa as being an interesting race of people, appreciating the advantages of civilized life. "But," he adds—

> "Notwithstanding these advantages, the history of Samoa is sad in the extreme. The Native inhabitants are decreasing rapidly, and their lands are passing into the hands of Europeans and other foreigners."

He further says—"Arms, gunpowder, and alcohol are the solvents under which Native life disappears." In the same year, 1884, when the noble Earl opposite (Earl Granville) was at the Colonial Office, communications were made to other Powers with a view to effect an International agreement for the purpose of putting an end to this nefarious traffic. This course was strongly urged also by Sir W. Des Vœux, the Governor of the Fiji Islands. Further communications seemed to have been carried on in August last, in consequence of some difficulty raised by the Government of the United States with reference to an International agreement. The noble Lord at the head of the Colonial Office would, perhaps, be able to say whether this difficulty had been removed, and whether the result of the negotiations with the European Powers with reference to the Western Pacific was a favourable one? There were not any recent Papers, so far as he knew, before Parliament on the same subject relating to the Congo and Niger countries; and he wished to remind their Lordships that a similar evil existed in those parts of Western Africa, if possible in a greater degree than in the Western Pacific. It appeared by the evidence of travellers and persons who had visited that country that spirits, especially rum and gin, constituted the principal medium of currency in dealing with the Natives. It was related by Mr. J. Thompson, a well-known traveller up the Niger, that—

> "At each port of call, the eye becomes bewildered in watching the discharge of thousands of cases of gin and hundreds of demijohns of rum."

Mr. Tisdel, Special Agent of the United States, said, as appeared in the Consular Reports—

> "Of this variegated currency, gin is the most valuable; indeed, it may be said to be worth its weight in gold. . . . Unfortunately, a few bottles of trade gin will go much further in trade with the Natives than ten times its value in cloth."

A well-known Lutheran missionary said—

> "The vilest liquors imaginable are being poured into Africa from almost every quarter of the civilized world."

He might also add the forcible words of the Belgian Plenipotentiary, Count Van der Straten, at the Berlin Conference in 1884. He said—

> "The Native races of the free zone will be sober, or will soon cease to exist. . . . If the Powers do not save him (the negro) from this vice (drunkenness), they will make of him a monster which will swallow up the work of the Conference. . . . He would wish the Powers to take the moral engagement to continue their work as they took it formerly in the Treaty of Vienna in regard to the suppression of slavery."

Statements to the same effect could be given almost without number. He wished now to refer for one moment to the Berlin Conference of 1884. That Conference of all the principal Powers of Europe, including also a Representative of the United States, was assembled with the view of settling trading and commercial questions relative to the Niger and Congo Free State, and at the same time as to furthering the moral and material well-being of the Native populations. Among other matters, the liquor question was introduced; and although opinions were strongly expressed in favour of restrictions upon that traffic, no satisfactory results were arrived at. The evils which were going on were admitted, and the wish was expressed by some members of the Conference that an International agreement should be arrived at in "such manner as to conciliate the rights of humanity with the interests of commerce." He did not think, however, that he was wrong in saying that the deliberations of the Conference, so far as that question was concerned, resulted in little more than a recognition of the evil and the expression of a wish. He might draw their Lordships' attention to the words of Prince Bismarck, who presided over the Conference. Prince Bismarck said, in his concluding address—

> "In another series of regulations you have shown much careful solicitude for the moral and physical welfare of the Native races, and we may cherish the hope that the principle adopted in a spirit of wise moderation will bear fruit, and will help to introduce these populations to the advantages of civilization."

He was sorry to say that he could not see that any course had yet been adopted which was likely to produce those happy results; and if no change was made it was certainly a somewhat novel mode of introducing populations to the advantages of civilization, and it was to be feared that hopes and wishes would avail but little unless something further was done. How, it might well be asked, could civilization or moral progress be promoted while unrestricted traffic in liquor was carried on and gin and rum were the chief medium of currency with the Natives? He believed he was supported in what he had said by the most rev. Prelate in a letter dated August, 1887, addressed to the Bishops of the British Colonies and Dependencies, from which he would ask permission to read a few words—

> "The attention of the Church has been recently drawn to the widespread and still growing evils caused by the introduction of intoxicating liquors among the Native races in the Colonies and Dependencies of the British Empire and in other countries to which British trade has access. . . . Uncivilized people are weaker to resist, and are utterly unable to control temptations of this kind. The accounts given of the numbers that perish from this cause and of the misery and degradation of those who survive are painful in the extreme, and besides the grievous wrong thus inflicted on the Native races, reproach has been brought on the name of Christ. . . . It is asserted by travellers of repute that in many parts of the world the moral character of the Native gains more by the preaching of Mahomedanism than by the preaching of the Gospel, for the former tends to make them sober."

He would say no more. He appealed to Her Majesty's Government in the hope that they would be able to give such further information as might show how that question stood at the present moment and what progress had been made in the direction of an International agreement. There would doubtless be an increase of commerce, especially in the Niger and Congo countries; but whether that commerce was to be civilizing or debasing would greatly depend upon the future course that might be adopted by the Governments of Europe and of the United States with regard to the traffic in intoxicating spirits; and he did not hesitate to say that unless some restrictions, and those very stringent ones, were put upon the liquor traffic, there might be commerce—there might be an increase of commerce—but that commerce, instead of promoting, would be crushing to civilization, and would make Christianity a byword among the nations of the earth.

Lord STANLEY of ALDERLEY said, he had nothing to add to the statement which had just been made to their Lordships on that subject; but as the traffic which had been described was demoralizing in the extreme, he hoped that Her Majesty's Government would not wait for an opportunity, but would renew the attempt to obtain the assent of the United States Government to the International Agreement already assented to by the European Powers. It would seem that the present was a favourite moment for approaching the Government of the United States on the subject. When, two years ago, that Government declined to assent, no reasons were given for that course; but the United States Secretary of State said that "he was not entirely prepared to join in the International Agreement," but at the same time he offered to take measures in the sense of the International Agreement. Now, a man who was not entirely prepared to join in an agreement was more likely to join in one than a person who was asked to do so for the first time, and he hoped Her

Majesty's Government would not, by delay, run the risk of having to treat with a successor of Mr. Bayard. Her Majesty's Government must be in possession of new facts since two years ago to place before the United States Government; and he gathered from the Blue Book that the assent of the German Government had been given since that date. There was a subsidiary reason for renewing these negotiations—namely, the maintenance of continuity of action of the Foreign Office, which had been so beneficial, and that the time and trouble taken by the late Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should not be lost. Her Majesty's Government and Her Majesty's subjects were not alone, nor entirely responsible for what took place in the Pacific Islands; but they were responsible for India, and from the papers circulated by the Committee for the Prevention of the Drink Traffic it appeared that the Excise Duties on spirits had trebled in Assam in the last 10 years, and that they had more than doubled in Bengal since 1868. Her Majesty's Government were probably aware of the correspondence in the papers at the beginning of this year on the failure of Christian missionaries. Various causes might be given for that, but it was certain that the missionaries complained of being handicapped by the Government encouragement of the sale of drink.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY (Dr. BENSON) said, that he had received a visit lately from a leading member of the Representative Council of one of the Crown Colonies of Africa, who informed him that some of the oldest Christian families in Sierra Leone had subscribed recently to the building of a mosque. The reason they gave for doing so was that they knew no better means of putting a stop to the spread of intoxication, which was destroying their own race, while their own Government gave them no aid or support, and Mahomedanism forbade the use of intoxicating drink by positive precept. Wrong inferences had hence been drawn, as if Christianity were less able to grapple with the vices of Native races than Mahomedanism; and Mr. Bosworth Smith, the very authority relied on for proofs of this, had himself come forward and very fully exposed the misconstructions and misrepresentations on that head. Christianity was the better able to deal with the temptations of those races, because it taught the principle of temperance and self-control, which did far more than positive precept to elevate mankind. But these Christians felt that Christianity had not fair play while it was not backed by the Christian Government which represented it and rested on it. The facts had been placed before us by our own agents, and appeared in our own Blue Books. Such a pamphlet as that of Mr. Weller, and the facts observed by Mr. Thomson, placed all in possession of the true state of the case. Mr. Weller had seen hundreds of Native girls lying in a state of deathly intoxication round the waggons of spirit sellers. There were districts in which payment of wages was made only in rum, until at length such a state of degradation was reached that many refused to receive payment in any other form. Ships put into harbour freighted with the goods of civilization, but were obliged to sail away undischarged because the people were so drunken, or so anxious to be drunken, that they had no taste or care for articles of commerce. We knew the agonizing efforts which had been made by the Queen of Amatongaland and by many Chiefs to save their people. By the course we were now pursuing we were not only injuring our commerce, to take a material view, but we were ruining the very tribes and nations who in that climate were absolutely essential to that commerce. Their Lordships must not suppose that the kind of liquor sold in London was sold to those people. There was a "trade rum" and a "trade gin," which were neither more nor less than liquid fire, mere poison, which absolutely destroyed in a very short time the men and women who consumed it. They consumed it and were consumed without stint. This liquor went among the people themselves by the ordinary name of "Death Itself." For his own part, he declined to believe a sentence which had fallen from one of the noble Lords who had spoken on the subject that evening; he declined to believe in the correctness of the information, which, however, was spread very widely, that our Government would in the slightest degree, for the sake of increased revenue, promote or encourage a practice so destructive to humanity. But he must say that we had been waiting for a long time for our

Government to take firm steps in the right direction. We were proud to hear of the action of our Representatives at the Berlin Conference, and of what the Congo Company itself desired. This nation had been celebrated in past times for the self-sacrifice of its great efforts for the suppression of the Slave Trade, efforts which had raised the tone of all nations. But at no time was the Slave Trade so destructive in its effects as this vice, fatal alike to the prospects of Christianity and to the future prosperity of the commerce of England. He would ask why, if nothing could be done elsewhere without the co-operation of other Governments, should not a beginning be made at least in our own Crown Colonies on the West African Coast? We had these entirely in our own hands. If it were not possible at present to effect an International arrangement, we would wait patiently, believing that our Government, with that continuity of action abroad which was so beneficial, would do what could be done in time. But why wait for ourselves? We could prevent the sale of this fire poison. We could put upon wholesome liquor such duties as would make it undesirable to pay or to receive wages in that shape, and check many other evils. He joined the noble Lord, therefore, in asking what progress had been made, and in pressing for Papers which might throw some light upon the subject. The Bishop of London who, as their Lordships knew, had done so much for the cause of temperance in this country, had asked him to explain how deeply he was interested in the question, and to state that nothing but an official engagement would have caused him to leave the House that evening.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Lord KNUTSFORD) said, that Her Majesty's Government were fully alive to the terrible mischiefs created by the importation and sale to the Natives of spirituous liquors, and he must state that it was only within the last few weeks that he had addressed a Circular to all the Crown Colonies, asking for full information as to any laws or ordinances existing on the subject and for any reports on this important question. He had also sent a Circular to all the responsible-government Colonies, asking them for any information to supplement that which had already been presented to Parliament in 1872, 1882 and 1883. When the answers to those Circulars had been sent in they would be laid upon the Table, and then there would be a full opportunity for discussing the action of the Government in the Crown Colonies and elsewhere. He would, before he sat down, point out very briefly what restrictions had been placed in Crown Colonies upon the sale of spirituous liquors to the Natives, but he must remind their Lordships that though Her Majesty's Government could, as a general rule, secure the passing of the laws or regulations required to prohibit such sale, they were not and could not be held directly responsible for any failure to give effect to those laws and regulations. In the meantime he could assure the House that Her Majesty's Government were bestowing their best attention on the subject. As regards the Western Pacific, there were no Papers at present to be presented other than those presented in September, 1887. Her Majesty's late Government invited the nations interested in the Western Pacific to arrive, if possible, at some International arrangement for prohibiting the liquor traffic in the Islands. That proposition was received favourably by all but one country—namely, the United States. It had been urged that the United States Government had given no reasons for their refusal to join in the arrangement, and had probably formed no decided opinion; but on that point he would read an extract from a letter from Mr. Bayard to Sir L. Sackville West, dated the 11th of April, 1885. Mr. Bayard said—

> "While recognizing and highly approving the moral force and general propriety of the proposed regulations, and the responsibility of conducting such traffic under proper and careful restrictions, the Government of the United States does not feel entirely prepared to join in the International understanding proposed, and will, therefore, for the present restrain its action to the employment in the direction outlined by the suggested arrangement of a sound discretion in permitting traffic between its own citizens in the articles referred to and the Natives of the Western Pacific Islands."

It was perfectly clear, therefore, that the United States Government were not inclined to modify their decision. He was, however, authorized to state that Her Majesty's Government, being fully alive to the importance of the question, would not allow any favourable opportunity to pass of bringing this matter again under the consideration of foreign nations, including the United States. Beyond that it was impossible for him to give any undertaking. As regards South Africa, there were strong restrictions in force in the Cape against the supply of liquor to the Natives. He was quite aware that there was a large importation of a very harmful liquor called "Cape smoke" into the parts of the country beyond the English Protectorate, but Her Majesty's Government could in no way check that, though they had pointed out to the Native Chiefs the necessity of exercising all the power they had to prevent that importation; and they hoped that their advice might effect some good. There was no question that there was legislation in Natal by which very stringent restrictions against the supply of spirituous liquors to the Natives could be enforced, especially in the case of repeated offences. In 1886 some correspondence, originating in suggestions by the London Chamber of Commerce, took place as to the desirability of regulating the importation of alcohol into South Africa by means of a uniform and high duty, but on consideration the late Government thought it better to wait until the result of the Western Pacific negotiations was known. In April, 1887, the attention of Her Majesty's present Government was again directed to this question, and Circulars were sent to all the Colonies in South and West Africa. Unfortunately, the replies received from the Cape and Natal were not very favourable; and it should be remembered that the Imperial Government had no power to interfere with the acts of the Cape Legislature. The Cape Ministers pointed out that an Excise duty being placed on corn-made brandy, and not on spirits produced from grapes, a higher import duty would only increase local manufacture. They were of opinion "that the traffic should be regulated rather by internal regulations than by import duties," and they finally "declined to take part in the proposed International agreement." As regards the words "local manufacture," it was only fair to state that we were not responsible for all the drinking that went on among the Natives, for they had extraordinary and carefully composed drinks of their own, which were very intoxicating. The Natal Government stated that if the Cape and Portuguese Governments discontinued the facilities they now gave for passing spirits beyond their frontiers, they would impose higher transit duties and raise the import duties to the rate agreed upon by the others. But they pointed to the stringency of the law in Natal for preventing the sale of liquor to the Natives, and they considered that the question would best be solved by adopting similar arrangements elsewhere. So much for the Cape and Natal. He would now turn to those territories immediately under British rule—namely, Zululand, Bechuanaland, and Basutoland. In all these territories there were very stringent regulations against supplying any kind of spirituous liquors to the Natives; and, as far as he knew, those regulations were *bonâ fide* observed. As far as the Imperial officers in those territories could do so, they had enforced those regulations, and in the case of Basutoland he was gratified to note that in the report ending the 30th of June, 1887, there was the following statement—"Drink traffic has ceased to exist." He thought, therefore, that it might fairly be pointed out that in those territories great efforts had certainly been made to restrict this traffic. Turning then to West Africa; in 1887 the Royal Niger Company pressed on the noble Marquess at the head of Her Majesty's Government the importance of checking the supply in West and Central Africa, and suggested an arrangement with France and Germany to levy a uniform rate of duty from Senegal to Cameroons. The noble Marquess at once expressed his willingness to negotiate, but suggested, he thought with good reason, that the views of the Colonies interested should first be ascertained. A circular was accordingly sent round, but only one Colony, Lagos, had replied, and the Government would press for answers from the other Colonies. The proposal was thought impracticable by the Governor of Lagos, as the coast line was not at present completely under the control of civilized Governments, especially at the mouths of rivers. And both with reference to this case of West Africa, and the case of the West Pacific, he must point out that very partial, if any, good could be expected by the agreement of two or even three countries to prohibit the importation and sale of spirituous liquours to Natives, so long as other countries could supply them, and he was afraid that as long as there was a demand the supply would come from those countries which declined or did not care to be parties to such agreement. He regretted that he was unable to give more information to their Lordships on this subject, but he would conclude by assuring noble Lords that Her Majesty's Government were fully alive to the importance of the subject, and were most anxious to deal with it.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

RESOLUTION.

Lord STRATHEDEN and CAMPBELL, in rising to move the following further Standing Order, namely—

> "That in the event of two or more Peers rising to address the House at the same time, the Lord Chancellor or Chairman of Committees may call on one of them to speak, and the Peer called upon shall then proceed to do so,"

said: My Lords, these Standing Orders are a part of Resolutions which were submitted to the House in 1884, and of which one was disposed of in that year, on the 4th of December. The urgent reason for going back at least to some of them at present is to be found in the two Notices of two noble Earls, for a Committee, to aim, as I understand them—as indeed they have avowed—at fundamental changes in the Upper Chamber. One of their Notices, having been fixed for to-morrow, bound me to this day as the only day on which such Standing Orders could be properly considered. It is true that Notice has been since withdrawn, and I am not under the same necessity of going on this evening. But as the hour, although advanced, is not yet very late, your Lordships may, perhaps, approve debate upon the first with the adjournment of the others. Let me assure the two noble Earls that I have no wish to anticipate in another shape the general discussion they have meditated. Such a course would be unjust to them; it would be repugnant to myself, and I entirely repudiate it. I stand on the position which I did in 1884, and which your Lordships will admit to be a strong one. It is that, when organic change is likely to be mooted, it is desirable to rectify anomalies which depend upon the House itself and not upon the Legislature, which require a Standing Order but not an Act of Parliament to alter them. If that position was correct in 1884, after the agitation in that year as to the House of Lords, which quickly passed away, it is more correct just now, when two distinguished Members of our Body are prepared, in some degree, to reconstruct it. Now, as to the point itself I need not long detain your Lordships. It was explained in 1884, and previously in 1870. It is familiar to all who have attended our proceedings. In 1870 it was insisted on by the noble Marquess, now Prime Minister, in a speech I shall not try to emulate. To sum it briefly, the practice which exists is calculated to prevent many in the House — above all the right rev. Bench—from rising to address us; it places men who rise in an undignified position; but, what is graver—since it affects not only individuals—it exposes the House itself at any moment to the chance of a Division in the midst of a remarkable and critical debate for which the time already is inadequate. It is, besides, a practice which exists in no political Assembly you can mention. The only question is as to the remedy. In 1884 it was proposed to attach the duty of calling on noble Lords when two or more rose together to the Lord Chancellor or Chairman of Committees, whichever was presiding. On much consideration and conference with other men, I am inclined to something rather different. Some of the objections to increasing the power of the Lord Chancellor for this end are thoroughly untenable. It could not be abused in any Party sense, as no one could be excluded by its action, and there would only be a question of priority. But it is true that, as one Session—in the vicissitudes of history—may give us many Governments and so many Lord Chancellors, the Lord Chancellor might not have the personal and local knowledge necessary for the function. I venture to suggest, therefore, that either the Lord Chancellor or Chairman of Committees should close the difficulty when it happens. If the Lord Chancellor was conscious of being equal to the task, he would perform it. If not, he would devolve it on the Chairman of Committees, who is appointed by the House, who represents the House, and knows it well from daily intercourse with many in it. No conflict would arise between them. On any given night it would be previously arranged which had to exercise the function. To devolve it wholly on the Lord Chancellor was the course in 1884 rejected by your Lordships. To devolve it wholly on the Chairman of Committees might be thought to give too much a secondary aspect to the Lord Chancellor, who is the Speaker of the House, although debarred from nearly all the power of that Office. As we have been frequently reminded by the illustrious Duke who often sits on the Cross Benches, everything is tentative. We should soon see how the Standing Order worked, whether it was wise to keep or proper to amend it. But nearly all depends on Her Majesty's Government. If they wish to bring in the words "whichever presiding," and thus leave the power to the Lord Chancellor in the House, the Chairman in Committees, I willingly accept them. If they would restrict the power to the Chairman in both cases, I see no practical objection to it. If they desire the House to have a final veto, as the noble Marquess did in 1870, they may recall his own expression—"unless the House do order otherwise." The only thing essential is that a remedy should be adopted before the merit and demerit of the Upper Chamber is examined. One point ought to be mentioned. In 1881 it was remarked as an objection that the Woolsack is sometimes occupied by the noble Lords who manage the Divisions, in the absence of the Lord Chancellor and the Chairman of Committees. By this Standing Order no new power is bestowed upon them, and no new power is wanted. It is only when the House is nearly empty and there is little competition for its ear or chance of two Peers rising that such a circumstance can happen. Moreover, if that recent system leads to inconvenience, there is no occasion to preserve it. Once more I ask the House to guard itself upon a vulnerable point against the hour of arraignment.

Moved, as a new Standing Order,

"That in the event of two or more Peers rising to address the House at the same time, the Lord Chancellor or Chairman of Committees may call on one of them to speak, and the Peer called upon shall then proceed to do so."—(*The Lord Stratheden and Campbell.*)

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Viscount CRANBROOK) said, he rose to speak on this subject with some diffidence in the presence of much older Members of the House than himself. From his experience, however, there did not seem to him to be so great a rush of Members to speak in this House as to require any stringent legislation on the subject. The Standing Order suggested by the noble Lord would in its working prove very inconvenient. For instance, it was customary for the Lord Chancellor in that House, unlike the Speaker in the other Assembly, to take part in the debates; but it would put him in a very difficult position, for he would not like to call on himself when other noble Lords rose. The Lord Chancellor was imposed on the House, and was not elected by their Lordships. It ought also to be borne in mind that the Lord Chancellor was not necessarily a Peer, and it would be a strange anomaly if the Order of the House was entrusted to one who might not be even a Member of the House. If the grievance sought to be remedied were a great one, or part of a scheme of reform which was to render the House of Lords better adapted to the exigencies of the present time and its debates of greater weight and influence in the country, the case would be very different. Under the circumstances he thought the House would hesitate somewhat before they surrendered the power of keeping order in their own Assembly; and, in his opinion, it would be far better to adhere to the present Rule without introducing the complications that would flow from the noble Lord's suggestion.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY said, he quite agreed with the observations of the noble Viscount. His objection to placing this power in the hands of the Lord Chancellor was that, although the Lord Chancellor from his high Office was entitled to the greatest respect, yet he was a Member of the Cabinet and a politician, and was not in a position of impartiality. No doubt any Lord Chancellor would, as an English gentleman, act as he conceived impartially; but he would not, as he ought to, be free from the suspicion of acting partially. The question was not one of much importance; it was comparatively seldom that there was any difficulty about the matter, and no reform on this point would do anything to increase the weight of public interest in the debates of that House.

LORD STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL said, he would point out that the noble Viscount who had just spoken wholly misapprehended the nature of the Standing Order he objected to. It was not to give the Lord Chancellor a general authority on Order, like the Speaker in the House of Commons, but simply the power to name the Peer who would continue the debate. The two functions had no species of identity. The noble Viscount who represented Her Majesty's Government had also quite forgotten the proposal now before them. It did not give the House a final voice, but left the whole decision to the Lord Chancellor or Chairman of Committees. However, it was useless to divide the House if the Government determined—as he thought most unfortunately—to oppose all alteration. According to his previous statement, he would not go on that evening with the further Standing Orders.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

House adjourned at a quarter before Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, *5th March*, 1888.

MINUTES.]—NEW WRIT ISSUED—*For* the Chichester Division of Sussex, *v.* The honble. Charles Henry Gordon Lennox, Earl of March, Chiltern Hundreds.

PUBLIC BILLS — *Ordered* — *First Reading* — Copyright (Musical Compositions) * [156]; Religious Prosecutions Abolition * [158]; Timber Acts (Ireland) Amendment * [157].

Second Reading—East India (Purchase and Construction of Railways) [143], *debate adjourned.*

QUESTIONS.

—o—

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)—ELECTION OF GUARDIANS (NOTTINGHAM)—MR. METCALF.

MR. H. S. WRIGHT (Nottingham, S.) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether it is a fact that, at the last election of Poor Law Guardians at Nottingham, Mr. Metcalf was disqualified from serving by reason of his having been convicted of felony at the previous Winter Assizes; whether such act of felony was his having caused the death of a passenger in the street below by letting fall from a window of his warehouse a heavy tarpaulin, which was admittedly a pure accident; whether the Judge who tried the case (Mr. Justice Grantham) sentenced him to one day's imprisonment, to date from the opening of the Assizes, whereupon he was immediately released; and, whether, if under the present state of the law he is disqualified for life from serving again, he will take means to have the law altered, by giving the Judges the power of dispensing with the civil disqualifications in such cases as the above, where the felony has been one of a technical nature only, and making such alteration retrospective to provide for this and any similar cases?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): Mr. Metcalf was convicted for feloniously killing and slaying Thomas Searcy, and the sentence, as stated in the Question, was one day's imprisonment. Section 48 of 4 & 5 *Will.* IV. c. 76 enacts that no person shall be eligible to hold any parish office, or have the management of the poor in any way whatever, who shall have been convicted of felony. The Board are of opinion that Mr. Metcalf, by operation of this provision, is disqualified for again serving the office of Guardian. The Board issued an Order declaring their decision to this effect in order to afford Mr. Metcalf the opportunity of having the Order brought up by *certiorari* and a decision of a Court obtained on the question. No proceedings, so far as the Board are aware, have been taken with that view. The case is, undoubtedly, a hard one; but I am afraid I cannot hold out any expectation that an alteration of the law will be made.

POST OFFICE (SCOTLAND)—ANONYMOUS LETTERS TO LADY MATHESON.

DR. R. MACDONALD (Ross and Cromarty) asked the Postmaster General, If anonymous letters to Lady Matheson, of the Lewis, have been repeatedly posted up for public inspection in the windows and on the walls of the Stornoway Post Office; and, if it is in accordance with the Post Office Regulations that Her Majesty's Post Offices should be used as placarding establishments to exhibit letters sent to private individuals?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): What the hon. Member, no doubt, refers to was a drawing of a coffin sent to Lady Matheson, which she asked the Postmaster of Stornoway to put up in the window of his office. However infamous the conduct of the writer, the course taken by the Postmaster was irregular, and this has been pointed out to him.

REGISTRAR OF FRIENDLY SOCIETIES—ROYAL LIVER FRIENDLY SOCIETY.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the fact that the Registrar of Friendly Societies in Scotland, on 30th November, 1870, certified that a Scottish branch of the Royal Liver Friendly Society had been established at Glasgow, and that its Rules were in conformity with law; whether it occurred knowingly, or through inadvertence, that, on 24th September, 1886, the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies registered new Rules of the Royal Liver Friendly Society, in which the registered Rules of the Scottish branch were ignored, and the rights and safeguards of its members, numbering in Glasgow alone between 60,000 and 70,000, and paying in subscriptions £32,000 a-year, were subverted; whether he is aware that the Committee of the Scottish branch complain that, under cover of its new Rules, the Central Committee are forcing upon the Scottish branch changes detrimental to the interests of the members of that branch; if the 1886 Rules were certified by the Registrar with a knowledge of their incompatibility with the earlier Rules of the Scottish branch, by what authority he registered and certified them; and, if he certified them through inadvertence, whether any steps will now be taken to secure the observance of the Rules of the Scottish branch of the Society registered in 1870?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.) (who replied) said: The Rules of 1886 were only registered in obedience to a *mandamus* from the High Court of Justice, obtained by the Society in September, 1886. The Registrar is not aware that any rights or safeguards of the Scottish members have been subverted. If the hon. Member will speak to me I will show him the correspondence.

TRADE AND COMMERCE—CONVENTION WITH CHINA—TRADE WITH THIBET.

SIR JOHN SIMON (Dewsbury) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether any steps have been taken since the last Session to give effect to that part of the Convention with China which relates to the opening up of trade with Thibet?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Her Majesty's Minister at Peking has contined to discuss the question with the Chinese Government; and he reported in October that they were unable at that time to decide definitely as to the opening of a trade post. The delay may, to a certain extent, be accounted for by the action of the Thibetans in maintaining an armed post beyond their frontier, on territory under the jurisdiction of the Indian Government. They have done this in defiance of the wishes of the Chinese Government; and steps are now being taken by the Indian Government to compel the Thibetans to withdraw.

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND)—TRAWLING ON THE EAST COAST.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire) asked the Lord Advocate, What measures the Fishery Board have taken, or can take, to enforce their prohibition against trawling within the area off the coast of Forfarshire and Fifeshire specified by them; whether it is the case, as alleged, that trawlers frequently trawl by night within the prohibited area in St. Andrew's Bay; and, whether the Board will take such measures as will make their prohibition of trawling within the specified area effective?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): Her Majesty's gunboat *Jackal* is at present watching the fisheries on the East Coast of Scotland, and her commander has special instructions to enforce the bye-laws against beam-trawling in the prescribed area. Allegations have been made of contraventions in St. Andrew's Bay; but the inquiries by the fishery officers have failed to obtain any evidence of the fact. Although the officers have requested the fishermen to report any case of contravention, no case has been reported. The Board are doing all in their power to prevent the contravention, and will continue to do so.

PRISONS (IRELAND)—MRS. RYAN, A PRISONER IN LIMERICK GAOL.

MR. PICTON (Leicester) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether on inquiry he finds it is a fact that Mrs. Ryan, a prisoner in Limerick Gaol for contempt, was at the time of her arrest last June nursing an unweaned infant, and was separated from it; and, whether, considering the length of her imprisonment and the needs of several young children, he will ascertain whether leniency can be shown in this case?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I understand that at the time of Mrs. Ryan's arrest her youngest child was 12 months old, and was left in charge of an adult sister. It is, of course, still open to the Ryans to come to a reasonable settlement with the Court, in which case I have no doubt the Court is quite prepared to exercise its clemency. As I have already explained, the Executive Government have no power to interfere.

MR. PICTON: I would be very much obliged if the right hon. and gallant Gentleman would say whether or not Mrs. Ryan was forcibly separated from this child, which was scarcely a month old?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: I think the child must have been more than a month old, because her husband was in prison for 12 months before.

MR. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's): Does the right hon. and gallant Gentleman say that the Lord Lieutenant has no power to interfere?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: I think the Executive has no power.

Subsequently,

MR. PICTON said: In consequence of the unsympathetic answer of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, I beg to give Notice that I shall take the earliest possible opportunity of calling attention to the harsh treatment of Mrs. Ryan.

Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald

SOUTH AFRICA — RESTORATION OF USIBEPU.

COLONEL DUNCAN (Finsbury, Holborn) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, When the Papers relating to the restoration of Usibepu in South Africa will be laid upon the Table?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth) (who replied) said: Papers relating to the affairs of Zululand are in a forward state of preparation, and will include Correspondence respecting the re-instatement of Usibepu in his territory. It is expected that the Papers will be ready in a fortnight or three weeks.

AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL—COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURAL AND DAIRY SCHOOLS.

MR. C. T. D. ACLAND (Cornwall, Launceston) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, Whether it is intended to publish the Evidence given before the Departmental Commission on Agricultural and Dairy Schools; and, if so, when it may be expected?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE) (Kent, Dartford), in reply, said, the Evidence was now in print, and would be laid before Parliament as soon as possible.

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) asked, what sum the Government proposed to grant in aid of Dairy Schools?

SIR WILLIAM HART DYKE said, he could not answer at that moment.

LAW AND JUSTICE — HEREFORD QUARTER SESSIONS—SEVERE SENTENCES ON BOYS.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) (for Mr. LABOUCHERE) (Northampton) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he is aware that four boys, aged respectively 12, 10, 10, and 8 years, pleaded guilty to a charge of larceny at the Hereford Quarter Sessions, and were sentenced by the Recorder to be imprisoned for 10 days, with hard labour, then to be whipped, and then to be confined in a reformatory for five years, two of them having already been in prison for 28 days previous to the Quarter Sessions; and, whether, in view of the fact that the prosecutors have signed a Petition for a mitigation of this sentence, stating that the offences were, in reality, trivial, and that the members of the Grand Jury have also signed a like Petition, stating that they would not have found a true bill had they known that such a severe sentence would have been passed, and that not one of the boys has ever been charged with any previous offence, he can see his way, now that they have served their term of imprisonment and been whipped, to remit the remainder of their sentence?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; the facts are as stated, except that the offence cannot be deemed trivial, being nothing less than an artfully contrived robbery effected by breaking into a shop and stealing from the till. Two of the prisoners had also been previously fined for small offences. I have, however, ordered the discharge of one of the boys (Morgan), he being, in my opinion, on account of his tender years, an unfit subject for a reformatory. I have ordered that the cases of the other three boys shall be brought up for my consideration in July next.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT — INSPECTED DAY SCHOOLS—INSTRUCTION IN AGRICULTURE.

Mr. HUBBARD (Bucks, N.) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, How many of the 19,022 day schools in England and Wales, inspected in 1886, are situated in the rural districts; in how many of the above 19,022 inspected schools did agriculture in "simple conversational lessons," or as a "class subject," form any part of the instruction of infants, and of older scholars; and, whether, in parts of the country where farming can fairly be said to be the "leading trade of the district," the Education Department would, in future, instruct Inspectors to require that lessons in agriculture shall be a necessary condition for earning the Merit Grant for infants, Article 106 (b), and the grant for class subjects, Article 109 (f)?

The VICE PRESIDENT (Sir William Hart Dyke) (Kent, Dartford): The Education Department have not the figures my hon. Friend asks for, nor do I think that his proposal to make the conditions of the Merit Grant more onerous, and to further restrict the liberty of teachers as to class subjects, would meet with much favour; but the whole question as to how the knowledge of agriculture can best be promoted in elementary schools is engaging the serious attention of the Government.

EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY ACTS — DEATH OF A GIRL AT A ROPE FACTORY.

Mr. H. CAMPBELL (Fermanagh, S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Is he aware that a girl named Elizabeth Sullivan was killed in the rope factory of Messrs. Frost and Co., Commercial Road, East, in the beginning of February of the present year; has information reached him that Messrs. Frost and Co. were warned on many occasions by their *employés* as to their liability to injury in consequence of the unprotected and dangerous state of the machinery, and that the space between the machines is so narrow that girls working in this factory have to tie themselves in sacking to prevent their clothes from catching; and, whether this factory has been duly inspected in the manner provided in the Employers' Liability Acts?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): The answer to the first paragraph is in the affirmative, and to the second paragraph in the negative. The Factory Inspector drew the particular attention of Messrs. Frost to the danger to be apprehended; and at his instigation they consented to adopt a plan for fencing the machinery which would obviate the danger, and which the hon. Member will find described in the last Report of the Factory Inspector. Unfortunately, only part of the machines had been fitted in the way suggested when the fatal accident occurred. The factory has been regularly inspected under the Factory Act. I may add that the makers of the machines have agreed, at the request of the Factory Inspector, to consider whether they cannot fit all similar machines in future with the proposed fencing.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—ELECTRIC COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE HOUSE AND LIBRARY.

Mr. HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.) asked the First Commissioner of Works, If he proposes to take any steps this Session for establishing electric communication between the Library and the House, so as to inform Members occupied in the Library of the progress of debate, and the names of speakers?

The FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. Plunket) (Dublin University): The question of the establishment of electrical communication between the House and the Library and other parts of the building has been considered; but there has not been, up to the present time, sufficient unanimity of feeling among hon. Members in favour of the proposal to justify me in going on with it.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—WEXFORD.

An hon. Member (for Mr. J. E. Redmond) (Wexford, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a fact that a large number of cases are awaiting hearing before the Land Commission in the County of Wexford, and how soon a Commission will sit in that county?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Land Commissioners inform me that it is a fact that a large number of cases is awaiting before them in the County Wexford, and that the Sub-Commission will commence its sittings in that county about the middle of next month.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND THE ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSIONERS—PROPERTY AND REVENUES.

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, When the Return, ordered on the 20th of June, 1887, of the property and revenues of the Church of England and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners under the several heads specified in the Address moved on that day, will be presented to the House?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) (Sheffield, Hallam) (who replied) said: Every effort is being made by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to complete this Return as soon as possible. They cannot, however, yet fix a date when it will be ready. Much correspondence and lengthy explanations by letter with incumbents who have given imperfect answers to the queries issued are necessary for the perfect preparation of the Return; and this correspondence, as well as the general supervision of the work, falls on the regular staff of the Department, who are already fully engaged with their ordinary duties.

In reply to a further Question by Mr. Channing,

Mr. STUART-WORTLEY said, the Return would be of great magnitude. In 1832 work of a similar kind occupied a Royal Commission specially appointed with an independent staff for no less than three years.

THE COLONIES—CONSTITUTION OF THE EXECUTIVE.

Mr. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether he will lay upon the Table a Return showing the constitution of the Executive in each Colony and, in the case of Colonies having Representative Assemblies, the constitution of those Assemblies, the number of Members, the number of electors, and the qualifications requisite for Members and for electors?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): Except as to certain details, the information asked for by the hon. Member is given in the Colonial Office List, which is published annually; but there will be no objection to request the Colonial Governments to furnish the desired Returns.

LAW AND POLICE (METROPOLIS)—CLAPHAM COMMON.

Mr. CAINE (Barrow-in-Furness) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If he will lay upon the Table the Correspondence between the Home Office, the Police Authorities, and the hon. Member for Barrow-in-Furness (Mr. Caine) with regard to the references to the police on Clapham Common, in his speech in this House on July 5, 1887; and also the Reports of the inquiry into the subject conducted by the Assistant Commissioner, Mr. Munro?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I should have been happy to comply with the request of the hon. Member but for this reason—namely, that in the course of the inquiry instituted by the Commissioners of Police private persons were interviewed and information of a confidential character was given by them which I should not be justified in disclosing. I shall, however, be very glad to show all the Papers to the hon. Member himself.

SOUTH AFRICA—RAILWAY AT DELAGOA BAY.

MR. GOURLEY (Sunderland) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If Her Majesty's Government have had their attention directed to the construction of a railway from Delagoa Bay to the hills bounding the Northern Transvaal territory; and, whether, considering the strategical importance of the railway to the Cape Colonies, and the existing ownership of Delagoa Bay, the Government will enter into negotiations with the Portuguese Government for their concession by purchase to Great Britain?

DR. CLARK (Caithness) inquired, whether it was not a fact that the proposed railway would start from a place where a large expenditure would be required for a harbour and end in a mountain, where no one could get at it?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The question of acquiring an interest in the railway from Lorenzo Marquez towards Pretoria has not been entertained by Her Majesty's Government, because it does not traverse and it is not intended to enter British territory. It is difficult to conceive on what grounds Her Majesty's Government could acquire possession of a railway in such circumstances. Any British interests concerned must be those of the South African Colonies; and Her Majesty's Government cannot assume their desire for the step which the hon. Member for Sunderland contemplates.

METROPOLIS—SAFETY OF THE STREETS.

MR. COGHILL (Newcastle-under-Lyme) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, in view of the number of accidents and deaths which occur annually in the streets of London, owing in some cases to the excessive pace at which vehicles of all sorts are driven, and to the absence of sufficient control over the traffic in the more crowded thoroughfares, he will take steps to secure the safety of pedestrians in using the streets of the Metropolis; whether the majority of the accidents happen at crossings, and whether the number of "refuges" could be increased; and, whether, when a fatal accident has occurred, any adequate means exist to make the driver amenable when he has been the cause of it?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): As the hon. Member is probably aware, constables have been for some years stationed at most of the principal crossings in the Metropolis for the purpose of controlling the traffic and assisting pedestrians. It has not been brought to my notice that this duty has been insufficiently performed; on the contrary, I am informed by the Commissioners of Police that few accidents happen at crossings. The question of providing refuges lies with the Vestries, to whom any complaint as to inadequate accommodation in this respect should be addressed. I am informed that the practice now is that when any driver has been the cause of a fatal accident, he is brought before a magistrate, and then held to bail or bound over on his recognizances pending the result of a Coroner's inquest. I have received no complaint that the present means are inadequate for making careless drivers amenable.

POST OFFICE — MAIL CART FROM HIGHAM FERRERS TO NORTHAMPTON.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he is aware that, about four weeks ago, tenders were invited for running a mail cart from Higham Ferrers to Northampton on Sunday evenings, and from Northampton to Higham Ferrers on Monday mornings; whether Mr. Charles Groome, of Higham Ferrers, tendered to do the work, with a suitable horse, for £38; whether the surveyor inspected the horse, and pronounced him well fitted for the work; whether, two days after, the tender of another man for £47 was accepted; whether Mr. Groome is a ratepayer of Higham Ferrers, has been for 15 years a member of the school board, has been for two years a waywarden for the parish, and is one of the election auditors for the borough; whether, when, some time ago, tenders were invited for carrying the mails daily from Northampton to Higham Ferrers, Mr. Groome's tender was rejected, and a tender £5 higher than his accepted; whether, in both cases, Mr. Groome offered as his bondsmen two of the most substantial ratepayers of the borough; and, whether he can state the reasons for which Mr. Groome's tender was declined and a higher tender accepted?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): It is the fact that the mail cart service referred to between Higham Ferrers and Northampton was thrown open to public tender a few weeks ago; that Mr. Groome tendered at £38 a-year; and that a higher tender than Mr. Groome's was accepted. No Postmaster General has ever held himself bound to accept the lowest or any tender; and in deciding to accept another tender than Mr. Groome's I considered I was making the best arrangement possible for a satisfactory performance of the service. In reference to the non-acceptance of a tender from Mr. Groome on a previous occasion, I find that Mr. Groome tendered with another person for the Northampton and Higham Ferrers daily service; but that preference was given to a tender of the same amount from a widow whose husband had held contracts from the Department for many years, and given much satisfaction.

MR. CHANNING: Is the right hon Gentleman aware that Mr. Groome is one of the most active Liberals in the district?

MR. RAIKES: No, Sir; I am not aware of that.

REFORMATORY SCHOOLS—THE THIRTIETH REPORT.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If his attention has been called to the Thirtieth Report on Reformatory Schools, in which it is said that—

> "Where the teaching power is sufficient, and the teachers are capable and anxious to do their duty, the results are satisfactory;"

and, if this is the case, whether the Government will insure efficient teaching power in all such schools by teachers who are capable and anxious to do their duty?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.), in reply, said, the question of securing more efficient teaching in the schools referred to had been for some time under the consideration of the Government, and the Bill about to be introduced would deal with the subject.

THE AUSTRALIAN COLONIES—EXTERMINATION OF RABBITS—M. PASTEUR.

MR. HOWARD (Middlesex, Tottenham) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether his attention has been called to a statement that M. Pasteur is sending by the mail steamer *Cuzco* a supply of microbes *des cholera de poules* for the extermination of rabbits in the Australian Colonies; and, whether, having regard to the great danger that this poisonous matter may be injurious to sheep and thus to human beings also wherever Australian mutton is used, he will warn the Colonial Governments of the possible consequences of allowing M. Pasteur's instructions to be carried out?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): This is a matter in which Her Majesty's Government cannot interfere with the discretion of the Australian Governments, who, however, are fully aware of the objection which has been raised as to the possibility of the proposed method proving injurious to other animals besides those which it is desired to exterminate. Whether or not that objection is well-founded is a question on which I offer no opinion.

COPYHOLD ACT, 1887—CLAUSE 30.

MR. RANKIN (Herefordshire, Leominster) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the Land Commissioners have framed and published the scale of compensation referred to in Clause 30 of "The Copyhold Act, 1887;" and, if so, where it is to be obtained; and, if not, when the scale is likely to be published?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): The Land Commissioners have framed the scales of compensation referred to in Clause 30 of the Copyhold Act, 1887, and these can now be obtained by application at the Land Office.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—THE DISTURBANCES AT MITCHELSTOWN.

Mr. HOOPER (Cork, S.E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether an inquiry is now proceeding at Cork as to the conduct of certain officers of the Royal Irish Constabulary on the occasion of the shooting of several persons at Mitchelstown in September last; and, whether it is an invariable custom that representatives of the public Press are admitted to such police inquiries under certain defined conditions; and, if so, why this custom has not been adhered to in this case?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: A Departmental inquiry is now being held in Cork into the conduct of members of the Constabulary on the occasion of the riot and inquest at Mitchelstown. Departmental inquiries are throughout the entire Public Service regarded as of a private nature, and representatives of the public Press are never admitted. Their proceedings are purely of a preliminary nature, with a view to ascertain whether further action is called for.

ADMIRALTY—THE "BRITANNIA" TRAINING SHIP.

Mr. GOURLEY (Sunderland) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, The age at which boys are now entered on board the *Britannia*; whether any examination of the cadets has been held during the past year; and, whether the Reports of the Examiners can be laid upon the Table before the Statement on the Navy Estimates?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): The limit of age of cadets entering the *Britannia* at the present time is 14; but after June next it will be extended to 14½. Examinations are held twice in each year, and the results are forwarded to the Admiralty. They are held by examiners appointed from the Universities, who are changed every two years. I shall be glad to give the hon. Member any information he requires; but I do not think that these Reports are of sufficient public importance to justify the expense of printing them.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—PROSECUTIONS AGAINST NEWSVENDORS.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether prosecutions against the newsvendors, J. D. Brosnan and John Green, at Killarney, were withdrawn by the Crown a couple of days before the 29th February; whether two days after the 29th February Pat Ferriter was sentenced at Dingle to three months' imprisonment for selling copies of *United Ireland*; how many, and what, terms of imprisonment has Ferriter got under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act; and, what magistrates sentenced him on each occasion?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The prosecutions against Green and Brosnan were withdrawn at Killarney by the Crown on the 21st of February. Ferriter was sentenced to three months' imprisonment on the 2nd of March at Dingle Petty Sessions before Messrs. Irwin, R.M., and Roche, R.M., for selling newspapers containing reports of alleged meetings of an unlawful Association in the County Kerry. There are two other convictions against this man in which the proceedings were also conducted under the recent Statute—one in December, 1887, when he was sentenced to 14 days' imprisonment for an assault on the police, the case being tried before Mr. Roche, R.M., and Captain Welch, R.M.; the other, in January, 1888, likewise for assaulting the police, when he was sentenced to seven days' imprisonment, Messrs. Irwin, R.M., and Roche, R.M., forming the Court.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON: Does the right hon. and gallant Gentleman know any of the circumstances of these assaults on the police? Does he know that this was a lame man who was sent to gaol for assaulting the police; and was not the assault merely a constructive one, the man being charged merely with forcing his way into a meeting. Would the right hon. and gallant Gentleman tell us why the prosecutions against Green and Brosnan for the same offence were abandoned on the 21st of February; and why the prosecution of Ferriter was commenced a few days afterwards?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I cannot give the hon. Gentleman an answer to the last Question. I do not know anything at all about the nature of the assaults on the police for which Ferriter was imprisoned.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON: May I ask, whether this is the same man who was sentenced to two months' imprisonment for shouting out to the police reporter at a meeting, "Take that down, Stringer?"

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I have no knowledge of the facts.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): Can the right hon. and gallant Gentleman explain to us why it is that proceedings are taken against the newsvendors whilst the publishers of the newspapers are not interfered with?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I think if the right hon. Gentleman studies the Act he will find ample reason for proceeding against the newsvendors.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: That is not the point. It may be as the right hon. and gallant Gentleman says; but are there not ample reasons for proceeding equally against the publishers of papers containing reports of these suppressed meetings?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I think I must ask the right hon. Gentleman to give Notice of the Question. He has been Chief Secretary himself.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: Quite so; but when I was Chief Secretary this Act did not exist.

Subsequently,

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON said: As I see the Chief Secretary is now in his place, I would ask him, with regard to this Question that I have asked, whether his personal attention has been directed to this case of Ferriter; and will he kindly explain what is the policy of sentencing this man Ferriter to three months' imprisonment for selling newspapers concurrently with the withdrawal of prosecutions against two men in Killarney for the same offence; and, whether the barony in which this has occurred has not been the quietest barony in Kerry; and, whether a murder or a serious outrage has ever occurred in this barony?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): Perhaps the hon. Member will be good enough to put his Question on the Notice Paper.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—APPEALS FROM SUB-COMMISSION, CO. CLARE.

Mr. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) (for Mr. Jordan) (Clare, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he is aware that in the year 1885, Stephen Collins, Thomas Collins, John Quealy, and Pat M'Mahon, in the Kildysart Union, County Clare, lodged appeals from the Sub-Commissioners to have their judicial rent fixed; whether these appeals have been yet heard or even listed for hearing at the next sitting of the Commission; if not, why not; and, whether he is aware that there are many cases lodged later than these four in the same Union listed for hearing at the coming Commission?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Land Commissioners state they will take a little time to investigate the circumstances referred to in the Question. They hope, however, to be able to furnish a reply in a day or two.

WAR OFFICE (CONTRACTS)—WORKS TO BE EXECUTED IN IRELAND.

Mr. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's) asked the Secretary of State for War, If there is any reason to be dissatisfied with the results of the system of limited competition which has hitherto been the usual practice in arranging contracts for works of large extent executed in Ireland under the War Department, and why is it being departed from in the case of the proposed new barracks at Grangegorman, Dublin, for which an unlimited competition has been advertised; whether contractors proposing to tender elect the surveyor to take out the quantities of the works on their behalf; and if in an unlimited competition the votes of the persons *bonâ fide* intending to send in tenders may be swamped by those of others who have no such intention, and for whom a surveyor might find it worth while to pay the deposit of £5 5*s.* each, entitling them to vote; if in the newspapers containing the notice asking for the names of persons desiring to tender for those works, an advertisement appears, directly under the War Department notice, from a Mr. Strudwick, of London, soliciting votes for the office of surveyor, in which it is stated, as an inducement to vote for him, that the quantities would be taken out in London; if this statement is correct; and, if so, how was the information communicated to Mr. Strudwick; and, whether, considering that this unlimited competition will place surveyors and contractors in Ireland at a disadvantage, he will state the reason for the proposed alteration of the usual terms of competition?

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. Brodrick) (Surrey, Guildford) (who replied) said: The prices of building contracts have ranged considerably higher in Ireland than in England; and as the Grangegorman Barracks constitute an extensive work, to a value of perhaps £60,000, the Secretary of State, with a view to obtaining the best contract for the public interest, has thought it desirable to resort to the usual practice of an open competition, rather than to the limited competition which has for some time prevailed for buildings in Ireland. Contractors proposing to tender elect the surveyor, and they pay a deposit on the amount of the contract according to a scale laid down in the Royal Engineer Regulations. Considering the amount of the deposit, such a transaction as is suggested does not seem very probable. An advertisement has appeared from Mr. Strudwick, who was, no doubt, aware that the quantities for large contracts, of which the designs have been prepared in London, are almost invariably taken out there. It is not apparent that this practice puts any class of contractors at a disadvantage.

Mr. MURPHY asked, if the hon. Gentleman was aware that only in one other case were the quantities taken out for a large Irish work in London?

Mr. BRODRICK said, he did not know; but that as the plans were made out in London he supposed the quantities would be taken out there too.

WAR OFFICE—CHELSEA HOSPITAL—AUGMENTED PENSIONS.

Mr. WOODALL (Hanley) asked the Financial Secretary to the War Office, If he is now in a position to state whether a decision has been arrived at in regard to certain cases in which pensions having been augmented by the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital, in recognition of exceptional good conduct, such augmentations have been cancelled by the War Office; and, whether the small additions conceded in such instances will now be confirmed?

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Brodrick) (Surrey, Guildford): Yes, Sir; the additional pensions referred to would be confirmed.

WAR OFFICE—ADMINISTRATION OF ORDNANCE FACTORIES.

Mr. WOODALL (Hanley) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether, under the new system of administration of the Ordnance Factories, regard has been had to the recommendations of Lord Morley's Committee, which not only enjoined that the Manufacturing Departments "should be placed under the control of a single head," but that such Controller should reside at Woolwich; whether it is true that the new Director of Ordnance Factories has been furnished with an office and clerical staff in Pall Mall; whether a considerable portion of his official business is transacted at the War Office; and, whether there are any sufficient reasons for these deviations from Lord Morley's recommendations?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The recommendation of Lord Morley's Committee is correctly quoted by the hon. Member. My intention is that the Director General of Ordnance Factories should transact the business of the Ordnance Factories at Woolwich, and give close personal superintendence by his presence on the spot. A room has been assigned to him at the War Office, because his duties necessarily bring him there at intervals to consult with other officials; but his permanent office is at Woolwich, and not in London.

PARLIAMENT—PRIVATE BILL LEGISLATION—A JOINT COMMITTEE.

SIR UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH (Lancashire, Clitheroe) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, How soon Her Majesty's Government will invite both Houses of Parliament to appoint the proposed Joint Committee on Private Bill Legislation; and, whether, pending the Report of that Committee, he will propose to amend Standing Order No. XXXV., so as to enable Private Bill Committees to sit till half-past 3 or later, notwithstanding the sitting of the House?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I hope to propose the appointment of a Joint Committee on Private Bill Legislation on Monday. The right hon. Baronet will find on the Paper a Notice of Motion in my name which, I think, will meet the object he has in view.

THE PARIS EXHIBITION (1889)—REPRESENTATION OF BRITISH INDUSTRIES.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) (for Mr. LABOUCHERE) (Northampton) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he has observed that a meeting has been held at the Mansion House, under the presidency of the Lord Mayor, to decide what steps shall be taken to secure an adequate representation of British arts, manufactures, and industries at the forthcoming Exhibition in Paris; and, whether Her Majesty's Government adheres to its resolution, that this country will not be officially represented at the Exhibition, as was the case at previous French Exhibitions?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I have observed that a meeting has taken place at the Mansion House with regard to the forthcoming Exhibition in Paris; but Her Majesty's Government do not propose to make any change in the course which was announced to the House last year in reference to this matter.

WAR OFFICE—MILITARY AND NAVAL INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENTS.

CAPTAIN COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If he could state to the House the date of the establishment of the Military Intelligence Department of the War Office; the date of the establishment of the Naval Intelligence Department of the Admiralty; the actual expenditure incurred for the Military and Naval Intelligence Departments respectively since their establishment down to the end of the financial year, 1886-7; the actual expenditure incurred for our Military Attachés abroad between the date of the establishment of the Military Intelligence Department and the end of the financial year, 1886-7; and the actual expenditure incurred for our Naval Attachés abroad between the date of the establishment of the Naval Intelligence Department and the end of the financial year, 1886-7?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): If my hon. and gallant Friend will move for the information he wants, it will be granted as an unopposed Return.

PARLIAMENT—NEW RULES OF PROCEDURE—UNFINISHED BILLS.

MR. HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, in view of the prospects of legislation by private Members having been so much curtailed by the New Rules of Debate, the Government would be disposed to consider favourably any proposal for enabling Bills which have passed a Second Reading or later stage in one Session to be taken up at the same stage in the next Session. He wished further to ask whether the practice was not adopted by eight Foreign Parliaments?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster), in reply, said, he was not prepared to say whether such a Rule prevailed in eight Foreign Parliaments, not having had Notice of the Question. With regard to the rest of the Question, his impression was that the New Rules would not in any way curtail the privileges of private Members, but that they would tend to facilitate the progress of those measures which Members brought before the House. Under those circumstances, he did not think it desirable, at the present time at all events, to propose any change in the Parliamentary procedure with regard to Bills before the House, with the view to their being taken up in the ensuing Session at the point at which they were dropped.

CHARITY COMMISSIONERS—THE FREE SCHOOL AT HITCHIN AND JOHN RAND'S CHARITY.

BARON DIMSDALE (Herts, Hitchin) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, When the schemes of the Charity Commissioners, laid upon the Table of the House of Commons on Monday, 20th February, relating to the Free School, Hitchin, Herts, and the John Rand's Charity for the poor of Holwell, Bedfordshire, will be printed; and, whether full opportunity will be afforded for their discussion before they are confirmed by Parliament?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am informed that the Papers alluded to will be circulated to-day, and the hon. Member will, doubtless, have an opportunity later for discussing these schemes.

RECORD OFFICE—REMOVAL OF PUBLIC RECORDS FROM WESTMINSTER.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether his attention has been called to the Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records, in which it is stated that 34 van loads of public records, described as valuable, which were removed from the Stone Tower adjoining Westminster Hall, are deposited in buildings—

> "Old, dark, ill-ventilated, rickety, and unprotected from fire from intervening dwelling houses;"

and, whether any steps have been, or are being, taken to ensure the safety of such valuable official documents?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The value of the public records alluded to is, of course, comparative with that of many other more valuable documents in the keeping of the Department. The Treasury have not as yet seen their way to laying before the House the Vote that would be necessary to place all the documents in absolute safety. I am sorry to say that there are some portions of the building in which the records are kept that are dark and old and ill-ventilated.

THE CIVIL SERVICE—POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS—SIR ALFRED SLADE.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether Sir Alfred Slade, of the Inland Revenue Department, while serving as such, has been not only a Master in the Grand Council of the Primrose League, but also Vice Chairman, and member of the General Purposes Committee and of the Finance Committee; and, whether this brings him within the Departmental Rule against being member of a Political Association?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Sir Alfred Slade, as a Trustee of some of the funds of the Primrose League, is *ex officio* a member of the Committee of the League; but I am informed that he has abstained from taking part in any of the proceedings of the League which would lead to an infringement of the Rule laid down by the Inland Revenue Department for its officers—namely, that they are to abstain from taking part in, or speaking at, any public political meeting. I may add that it is the duty of the Government to see that every officer of the Department complies absolutely with the conditions laid down.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I wish to know, whether it would be perfectly competent for any member of the Civil Service, in this or any other Department, to belong to the Home Rule organization without incurring censure from his official superiors so long as he does not take part in a public meeting?

[No reply.]

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I will renew that Question to-morrow.

METROPOLITAN POLICE—ALLEGED ASSAULT.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked a Question of which he had given the Secretary of State for the Home Department private Notice—namely, Whether in the case of the man Coleman alleged to have been assaulted by the police after he was in actual custody in Bow Street Police Station, on the 13th of November, and which case the right hon. Gentleman stated on Friday last had been sprung upon the Government and the House by him (Mr. Bradlaugh), without any previous Notice or proceedings, it was not the fact that evidence on oath was given as to this assault before Mr. Vaughan, in open Court at Bow Street, the Treasury Solicitor being present; that a summons for the assault was granted by Mr. Vaughan against the police constable on sworn information duly filed in Court; whether, Coleman being a prisoner, an order from the Home Office authorities was applied for for the attendance and examination of Coleman at the hearing of the Court; whether, on the return of the summons before Mr. Bridge, the magistrate sitting at Bow Street, half an hour's adjournment was not asked for on the ground that Coleman's solicitor was then actually speaking in another Court in another case, and that Coleman himself had not yet been brought up from prison; whether counsel for the Government did not oppose such brief adjournment; whether the summons against the police was thereupon dismissed with £10 costs, without any hearing and in the actual absence of both Coleman and his attorney; whether such of the sworn informations referred to had not been in the possession of the Solicitor to the Treasury for more than two months; and, whether such information had not been submitted to the Director of Prosecutions or to the Law Officers of the Crown?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I have privately informed the hon. Member that I was unable to answer the Question to-day. Indeed, I never heard the terms of the Question until the hon. Member read it just now. The moment his Notice arrived it was sent over to the Solicitor to the Treasury; but I have not yet been able to obtain the information asked for.

MR. BRADLAUGH: The reason why I did not postpone the Question was that there was a direct challenge of fact from the right hon. Gentleman on Friday to myself.

THE NAVY ESTIMATES.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.) inquired, When the Navy Estimates would be circulated? observing that they were very late this year.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): The only reason for the delay is that the form in which the Estimates are to be presented has had to be recast, and they will contain more information than they did previously. Consequently, there has been a delay on the part of the printer. The printer undertakes, however, that they shall be circulated to-morrow, and we propose to take the Navy Estimates on Monday.

THE CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick, &c.) asked, When it was proposed to go into Committee on the Civil Service Estimates?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): It will be necessary to take a Vote on Account of the Civil Service next week; but the Civil Service Estimates will not be taken in detail until after Easter.

PARLIAMENT—DURATION OF SPEECHES.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury a Question of which I have given him private Notice—namely, Whether it is not a fact that more than half of the whole time allotted to the Trafalgar Square debate was occupied by five Members, three of whom made two speeches each; whether he is aware that a large number of hon. Members who desired to address the House were prevented from doing so through lack of time; and whether, seeing that how the hours allotted to debate are limited, he will make an earnest appeal to right hon. and hon. Gentlemen to put what they have to say as concisely as possible, in order to give more opportunities to a larger number of hon. Members to take part in the debates of this House? I wish to explain that I have no personal feeling in this matter, as I was not one of those who desired to take part in the debate of last week.

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I have not made any careful calculation of the time occupied by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen in the debate on Thursday and Friday last; but it undoubtedly was the case that some of the speeches were lengthy ones. As regards one or two of the speakers, it was almost unavoidable that they should be so, for when an indictment is brought against the Government the indictment must be answered; and both those who bring the indictment and those who answer it must, I am afraid, speak at great length. But if I have influence in the House, I will certainly use it in the direction to which the hon. Gentleman refers. I believe it would be more acceptable to the House that, as a rule, speeches should be concise and terse, and should be generally condensed, and that hon. Members who desire reasonably to take part in the debate should be able to do so; and I will use any influence which I may possess to attain the object of the hon. Member.

Mr. CAINE (Barrow-in-Furness) asked whether, after the sympathetic reply of the right hon. Gentleman to the Question of the hon. Member, he would consider the desirability of the Government bringing forward the Rule which stood in his (Mr. Caine's) name limiting the duration of speeches to 20 minutes?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: We should have great reluctance in imposing on the House any restrictions which can by any possibility be avoided; or to impose on the House by Rule anything which we can attain by appealing to the good sense of the House. I venture to hope that the suggestions which have been made in the direction of shortening the speeches in this House will have the effect desired by hon. Members, and that it will not be necessary to lay down positive and absolute Rules as to the length of time which should be occupied.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

In reply to Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth (Lancashire, Clitheroe),

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster) said, immediately Supply was concluded, the Local Government Bill and the Budget would be introduced.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.) said, the right hon. Gentleman gave a reply from which two deductions might be made. He said that when the Votes in Supply had been gone through, the Local Government Bill and the Budget would be introduced. Did the right hon. Gentleman mean that the Budget would be taken before Easter?

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, he had good reason to hope that it would be possible for the Government to bring forward the Budget before Easter; but, in the absence of his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he could not say on what day it would be introduced.

COMMONS—PURSUING GAME.

Mr. M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the sentence passed on the 29th of February by the Maidenhead magistrates on William Cartland and John Herbert, of £1 and 10*s*., or 14 and seven days' hard labour respectively, for the offence of trespassing on Pinkney's Green Common in search of game, with two dogs, the only evidence against them being that of one gamekeeper, who stated that they beat some bushes on the common, turned up a hare, and that when the dogs ran after it they did not call them off; whether the prisoners declared that they called the dogs off, and that they had no intention of searching for game, but were merely walking across the Common; whether, as the men are poor, Cartland being obliged to get a week allowed in which to raise the money, he will advise the magistrates to modify the sentence; or, if either of them go to prison in default, he will order their release; and, whether a freeholder and commoner on Pinkney's Green Common is liable to be arrested by a gamekeeper if, when walking over the Common with a dog, it raises a hare, and he does not at once call it off?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I have received a letter from the Chairman of the Maidenhead Bench, from which I gather that both men were seen by the gamekeeper of the gentleman who has manorial rights over the Common beating the furze bushes near the edge of the common with sticks for 20 minutes. They had two dogs with them. They found a hare, and both dogs and men gave chase, when the keeper showed himself. Neither of them was arrested by the keeper; but they appeared on summons in the ordinary way. Cartland had several previous convictions against him. It does not seem to me to be a case which calls for any interference on my part.

Mr. M'LAREN asked whether commoners had a right to walk over a common with dogs?

Mr. MATTHEWS: Clearly they have—supposing there is a right of way.

BURGH POLICE AND HEALTH (SCOTLAND) BILL.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Lord Advocate, When he proposed to proceed with the second reading of the Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) Bill?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities), in reply, said, the Bill had been before the House on a good many occasions, and he proposed to take it up that night.

DR. CAMERON appealed to the First Lord of the Treasury, whether it was desirable that a Bill of 250 pages and 500 clauses, which was only delivered to Members on Saturday last, should be brought on the day after it was presented; and, whether he would not grant Members interested in the subject a little reasonable delay to consider the Bill?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, the Bill would not be brought on that night; but the hon. Gentleman was aware that it was chiefly a consolidating Bill. It was an old Bill, which had been before Parliament for several Sessions; but it would not be taken that night.

DR. CAMERON said, the Bill raised a great number of important matters about disease and other controversial points, on which there ought to be an opportunity for discussion. When would the Bill be brought forward?

MR. W. H. SMITH said, it would not be taken this week.

MEMORANDUM OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

RELATING TO THE

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1888-9.

(*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.*)

The Estimates for 1887-8 showed an anticipated expenditure of £15,305,700 for effective, and £3,088,200 for non-effective services, making a total of £18,393,900. For the first time for eight years no Supplementary Estimates have been found to be necessary.

Before making any comparison with the Estimates now submitted to Parliament, it should be remembered that the charge for naval ordnance has been transferred to the Navy Estimates, while the cost of the transport of troops by sea is now to be borne by the Army. If the same course had been adopted in 1887-8, the Army Estimates for that year would have amounted to £16,882,319.

For 1888-9 the Estimates show an expenditure of £16,700,300, of which £13,672,700 is for effective, and £3,027,600 for non-effective services. To this must be added the Ordnance Factories' Vote for £30,000. It will thus be seen that, compared with last year's Estimates, adjusted as above, the amount now required for the service of the Army shows a net decrease £152,019.

I proceed now to an examination of the more important changes in our military organization and preparations which have taken place in the past year, and to the effect on the individual Votes resulting therefrom.

I.

ORGANIZATION AND ESTABLISHMENTS.

It may be well to commence by a short explanation of the changes which have been rendered necessary by the re-organization of the War Office. These changes, I glad to say, are now practically complete. Their carrying out has entailed much labour on certain branches of the Department, and especially on the Permanent Under Secretary of State, to whom I am greatly indebted. Nor can I omit to mention the cordial and loyal co-operation of Sir Stafford Northcote, M.P., the late Surveyor General of Ordnance, in the initiation of these measures.

The primary feature of the re-organization has been the abolition of the department of the Surveyor General of Ordnance, and the concentration of the whole administrative work of the Army in the hands of its chiefs, subject to the control of the Secretary of State. This most important change has now been carried out without friction, and the country has every reason to be grateful to

His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief and his Staff for the readiness with which, in the public interest, they have undertaken new, laborious, and responsible duties. Amongst the advantages which I anticipate from this alteration, I place first the fact that the Military Authorities will now be enabled to take a comprehensive view of the whole condition of the military resources of the country, of our requirements, and of the means available for meeting them. All the threads are in their own hands. Any scheme put forward by them should be founded upon full knowledge of all surrounding conditions, and the Secretary of State will be enable to rely upon them for advice as to the comparative importance of all proposals for Army expenditure.

Secondly, the control of the department of the Financial Secretary is extended to all branches of the War Office. And it is gratifying to be able to quote from the Report of Sir M. W. Ridley's Commission on Civil Establishments, which has been issued since the new scheme for the War Office was explained to Parliament, the recommendation that—

> "If the Financial Secretary of the War Office, and his chief adviser the Accountant General, were put into their proper functions as financially responsible for the whole of the Army expenditure, the Secretary of State would have a real grasp and control, which he does not now possess, over both Estimates and Votes."—(Paragraph 21.)

The reform thus indicated has in fact been carried out, and has entailed great labour on the Financial Secretary.

Thirdly, in accordance with the statement made in Parliament last Session, the inspection of all warlike stores and armaments has been entirely separated from manufacture; and for the future any article produced either by the trade or in the Ordnance Factories will be equally subjected to the inspection of the Military Authorities before being passed into the Service. All the manufacturing establishments—except the Clothing Department—have been placed under the control of a single head, who is termed the Director General of Ordnance Factories. It is intended that this Officer shall make an annual Report to the Secretary of State upon the work of his department, which will be presented to Parliament.

It will be remembered that those two important changes—namely, the separation of inspection from manufacture, and the placing of the Government Factories under a single head, are both in accordance with the recommendations of Lord Morley's Committee on the Manufacturing Departments.

The transfer to the Navy of the charge for Naval armaments, which I indicated in my last year's statement, has involved the separation in all parts of the world of the stores intended for the use of the Army and the Navy respectively. Although this division is not yet quite complete, it is accomplished at all the more important stations, and the preparation of the necessary Returns is proceeding as rapidly as possible. The result is that for the first time the Army Estimates show approximately—as between the Army and Navy—the true cost of the services undertaken by and for the Army.

The few changes proposed in the Establishments for the present year will be best explained in the course of a short review of our present state of organization.

The preparation of schemes for the utilization of all our available forces in the Service or in the defence of the country has made considerable progress during the past year. This task presents greater difficulties with us than in most countries, because of the different conditions under which our forces are serving, and of the variety of contingencies against which the schemes have to provide. We have to be prepared for the possibility of one of those small wars so common in our history, of a larger expedition involving the despatch of one or two Army Corps, and also for the general defence of the country, of the Imperial fortresses and coaling stations, and of our commercial ports.

For the first object, it is thought to be essential that we should so organize our Army as to be able to despatch a small force, complete in every detail, on the shortest notice, without calling out a single man of the Reserves. For this purpose the Aldershot Division has been raised to a slightly higher establishment than before, the Cavalry regiments first for service now numbering 707 (all ranks) with 424 horses, instead of 625 with 380 horses, and the eight Infantry battalions being maintained at an establishment of 1,010 (all ranks), whilst a reduction has been made in the numbers at the depôts.

The only remaining changes in Establishment which it is necessary to notice here consist of an increase of 186 men in the Commissariat and Transport Corps, and a decrease of 200 in the Medical Staff Corps.

The net result is that the increase in the Establishments, upon which the Estimates are based, amounts to 276 men.

It is satisfactory to note that the 1st Class Army Reserve shows a steady and appreciable increase, the total on the 1st of January, 1887, being 46,858; whilst on the 1st of January of this year it reached nearly 51,000 men. It is estimated that the transfers from the Colours to the Reserve during 1888 will number 8,800. Owing, however, to the very large number of recruits enlisted 12 years ago, and who consequently complete 12 years' service and become entitled to their discharge this year, the "waste" from the Reserve will this year be exceptionally heavy, and will probably exceed the number transferred from the Colours. To meet this, to some extent, I have agreed to relax the regulations (which appeared somewhat unduly stringent) under which men join the "Supplementary Reserve," composed of soldiers who have completed 12 years' service.

It has been decided during the past year to enlist men for the Royal Engineers, the Commissariat and Transport Corps, and the Medical Staff Corps, for three years' service only with the Colours. This is an important step, which will, as time goes on, materially increase the Reserve of these valuable corps.

In the Memorandum attached to the Estimates of 1887-8 it was pointed out that a general review of our available forces showed that, with certain changes and additions, they would be sufficient to provide men for all our home and colonial garrisons, and also to furnish two Army Corps of Regular troops, together with a strong Cavalry Division, and the necessary troops to guard their line of communication. The two great deficiencies to be noted were in connection with our garrisons, and existed in the Garrison Artillery and in the Engineers. The present Estimates provide for the whole of the regular Garrison Artillery required by the mobilization scheme, at home and abroad, and for all the necessary Submarine Miners. The only remaining deficiency consists of four companies of Fortress Engineers, which it is not proposed to raise this year.

A mobilization involves the calling out of the Reserves necessary to raise the different units to war strength. It cannot, therefore, be effected without the previous determination of the places at which these are to be armed and equipped, the provision at such places of the necessary clothing, arms, accoutrements, and equipments, the selection of the ports of embarkation, and the storing at those ports of the ammunition, tents, vehicles, and supplies requisite to complete the outfit for war. In all these particulars considerable progress has been made during the past year.

The whole of the units necessary to complete the organization of two Army Corps, a Cavalry Division, and troops for the communications, are now actually in existence, with the exception of some deficiencies in the Departmental Corps, which could, however, be rapidly filled up on an emergency; and, in calculating the numbers required, a full allowance has been made for weeding out young soldiers and those who are likely to be physically unfit for active service. The places of mobilization and of embarkation have been selected, and each unit knows exactly where it will have to go when the order to mobilize is given.

For the 1st Army Corps, the Cavalry Division, and the troops for the Line of Communication, the whole of the necessary outfit, including clothing, arms, accoutrements, equipments, tents, stores, supplies, and vehicles, might have been said to be practically complete, except that every month produces new demands and alterations, and some of the transport matériel is not of the newest pattern. For the remaining troops it is partly in existence, and could probably be completed without serious delay; but this must, to some extent, depend on the country in which operations were anticipated.

These stores have been hitherto, to a great extent, concentrated in large depôts. The arrangements for the decentralization of a large portion of them, which is indispensable to avoid delay and confusion, are being proceeded with. I may mention in particular that it has been decided to utilize the great facilities afforded by Southampton as a port of embarkation, and to relieve the Dockyard at Portsmouth from being encumbered by the requirements of the Army at a time when its resources would probably be required for naval purposes alone. The recent transfer of the offices of the Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Company to the Thames has enabled us to hire the necessary store accommodation at Southampton, and the transfer of the stores will shortly be effected.

The decentralization of clothing and equipment stores, which, without great care and constant inspection, deteriorate very rapidly, presents questions of difficulty, owing to the variety of the patterns and of the numbers to be provided; and no solution has yet been arrived at. In the meantime, the issue from the central depôt, where the reserve is at present stored, could be accomplished with rapidity.

There is one general principle which, I think, should be borne steadily in mind in considering all questions of stores, and that is that while we should keep up fully sufficient stores of articles which take time to produce or to procure, no advantage arises from maintaining large reserves of goods which can be rapidly obtained from the open market in times of emergency. For these we should rely on the vast producing powers of this country. And this principle applies, not only to stores, but also, in some cases, to personnel. There are certain auxiliary services to an army, such as the Postal Corps, the Railway Corps, the Telegraph Corps, and the like, which we can largely expand from Volunteer organizations at any moment. In the case of all such corps, our proper policy would seem to be to keep up only the smallest departmental cadres, and to fall back in war time on the large Reserves furnished by these organizations.

The problem of providing on an emergency an adequate supply of horses at a moderate cost, and of avoiding the enhancement of price which a sudden demand for large numbers would inevitably cause, cannot yet be said to have been solved. The experiment that is being tried is that of inviting owners of horses, suitable for military purposes, to enter into a provisional agreement, undertaking to sell their horses to the Government, when called upon, at a given price, receiving in virtue of such agreement an annual fee for every horse. If this or any other voluntary scheme should fail—which, I think, need hardly be anticipated—the only course remaining will be to put in force those powers of compulsory requisition which are contained in existing Acts of Parliament, supplemented by any further provisions which may be necessary.

The systematic organization of the troops available for our home defence has also made some progress. The variety of conditions under which the Auxiliary Forces—upon whom our main reliance must necessarily be placed—serve, makes this a task of difficulty. It is of primary importance that the troops, and especially the Artillery, should be familiarized with the works they would, on an emergency, have to defend, and with the guns they would have to serve. Accordingly, the General Officers commanding districts have been directed to frame their proposals for the training of Volunteer Corps with a special view to attaining this object. But time will be required to accomplish this; for the local exigencies of defence sometimes necessitate the supply of contingents from very distant corps, whether of Militia or Volunteers. We are, however, making special endeavours to foster the increase of each particular arm in the neighbourhood of the locality where it is required, and to discourage any enlargement of the number of Infantry Volunteer Corps. Arrangements have been made for the formation of 21 Volunteer Batteries of Position, the guns being offered on the condition of their being efficiently horsed on a certain number of occasions.

The great progress made in recent years in the art of submarine mining has necessitated the organization of special corps of Engineers, both of Militia and Volunteers, as well as in the Regular Service, for this purpose. We have every reason to think that in all the localities where this form of defence is required, the necessary force can be raised; and provision has been made in the Estimates for raising 10 additional companies for the defence of the principal mercantile ports.

Lastly, the organization and registration of transport for all those of our Volunteer Forces which are not required for purely garrison purposes has made some progress. A small grant is being offered to certain corps this year on condition of their producing efficient regimental transport for inspection on fixed occasions. We anticipate most useful results from it; and even where no grant is offered, there is reason to hope that, in agricultural districts, at any rate, all the transport which is necessary can be registered for active service.

Turning now to the general condition of the Auxiliary Forces, as apart from the position they occupy in the mobilization scheme, I am glad to be able to report a steady improvement in efficiency in all branches.

An unsatisfactory feature, however, is a decrease in the enrolled strength of the Militia. For the last four years there has been a regular increase of recruits, but on the 1st of January 1888 the enrolled strength was less by 1,770 non-commissioned officers and men than on the same date in 1887. No other cause has been assigned than a greater facility in procuring work. On the other hand the percentage of loss by desertion was lower, and the confidential Reports are very satisfactory as regards the physique, conduct, and training of the men. The supply of officers has always been a cause of some anxiety; but this year the Returns are most satisfactory, showing that although 190 Officers passed into the Regular Army, being 40 more than usual, the Militia is able to reckon upon 132 more Officers than in the previous year.

The result of the musketry training of the Militia has never been so good as at present. 21,203 more men were exercised in 1877 than in the previous year, and 111 full battalions as against 60. Only 9 battalions have been unable to go through their musketry instruction for want of range accommodation. The standard of shooting shows considerable advance.

The present system of drilling Militia recruits at the head-quarters of the regimental districts has tended to affiliate the men more closely to the Regular troops. Some difficulty has arisen in certain cases as to the place of training of Militia battalions, the localities interested being, not unnaturally, reluctant that any change should be made. I have felt it to be my duty to be mainly guided in this matter by considerations of military efficiency.

The depression in agriculture still continues to affect the Yeomanry, and it appears from the Reports of the Inspectors that—especially in the northern districts—recruits are beginning to be more largely drawn from the class of tradesmen than of farmers. The general efficiency of the force has, however, undoubtedly increased. In the northern district a scheme of mounted ambulance detachments has been started in several regiments, and in the midland counties two regiments underwent their training in camp instead of in a town; an experiment attended with marked success, and which I should be glad to see extended when suitable ground can be procured.

All branches of the Volunteer Force have made substantial progress during the past year. Its numbers are higher than at any previous period of its existence; the Reports speak favourably of its discipline and efficiency, while the various developments, which have been already described, testify to the general desire to fit themselves for all possible requirements which pervades all Volunteers. An illustration of this may be found in the ready and energetic manner in which, in all parts of the country, they are preparing themselves to comply with the conditions to be attached in future to the Capitation Grant. It will be remembered that it has been decided that (after the year 1887-8, which was to be a year of grace and transition) the whole Capitation Grant, increased in amount to 35*s.*, is mainly to depend upon efficiency in shooting. All men, with the exception of recruits, are to pass out of the 3rd class in musketry in order to obtain the grant. And, although the last annual Returns of Musketry cannot, for various reasons, be taken as affording any very valuable test, yet the reports which reach us from all parts of the country tend to show that the recent change will conduce to greater efficiency in musketry without operating with undue severity. Several modifications in the regulations have, moreover, been made to meet certain difficulties which have been pointed out. The most important of these relates to ranges. There can be no doubt that in all large towns, and even in some country districts, the provision of ranges is becoming a more and more serious question. Accordingly, a Committee has made special inquiry into the matter, and, in accordance with their recommendation, the use of screened, and even of underground ranges, will, under certain restrictions, be authorized in the case of corps which find great difficulty in obtaining their practice at open ranges. A concession has also been made to meet the loss, which a corps might otherwise have sustained, by the admission of a recruit who turned out to be incapable of getting into the 2nd class. Provided that he is efficient in drill, a Capitation Grant of 10*s.* will be given for the second and third year, so as to enable the value of his outfit to be recovered.

Amongst other interesting examples of the great desire existing in the Volunteer Force for improved efficiency, to which the War Office is prepared to offer every encouragement, I may mention that Mounted Infantry detachments have been added to several Volunteer battalions, and that cyclist sections have been formed in many corps. One separate corps of cyclists has also been authorized, and is in process of organization. A much larger sum than usual has been asked for, this year, to enable Volunteers to drill with the Regular Army; and it is hoped that 15,000 Volunteers will be enabled to profit by this excellent method of improving in military efficiency. There can be no doubt that the connection of the Auxiliary Forces with the Regular Army is annually becoming closer, and will be much encouraged by the increasing interest now taken by all Officers commanding districts in that branch of their duties which concerns the Auxiliary Forces, and by the fact that all are now assigned a definite and responsible share in the common defence of the country.

The increased Capitation Grant, and the other grants which have been made to increase the efficiency of the force, make a substantial addition to the Estimates to which I cannot believe that any objection will be raised. There is, however, an aspect of it to which attention should be called. These increasing grants of public money are in some districts killing local contributions, of which it is, in the interests of the force, most desirable that they should continue to have the assistance.

The improvement of the arms in the hands of the troops is receiving serious attention. The manufacture of the new 12-pr. field gun is proceeding steadily. In the course of the financial year all the batteries of the two Army-Corps, and one other battery, will be armed with this very excellent weapon.

After a careful and exhaustive examination of the numberless inventions put before them, the Small-Arms Committee, presided over by Major-General Philip Smith, C.B., have submitted a magazine rifle for approval. The magazine is detachable, and of very simple construction. The calibre is ·303, experience having proved to the Committee that equally effective results can be obtained with this as with the originally proposed bore of ·4. The rifle having been provisionally approved by my military advisers, a certain number are being made for final trial by the troops under all conditions. Without this it would be imprudent to commence manufacture on a large scale, and it may undoubtedly suggest minor alterations of advantage. It will then be necessary to prepare the machinery required for the manufacture of the arm. These preliminary steps will, as I am advised, prevent the completion of many rifles during the present year. If however, Parliament thinks fit to vote the necessary money (and the total cost will be heavy) a large number can be constructed in 1889, and there is every reason to hope that our Army will be equipped with a magazine rifle almost as quickly as—and with an arm superior to that of—any other nation.

In the meantime it is impossible to discontinue the manufacture of Martini-Henry rifles, or the conversion of Enfield-Martini rifles to the bore of ·45. Not only will they be required for the Regular Army until the new rifle is ready for them; but it must be anticipated that for some time to come they will remain the armament of the Militia and the Volunteers.

The examination of all the weapons in the hands of our troops, promised during last Session, has steadily progressed. It has been found that a considerable number of Martini-Henry rifles, naving been in use for many years, are worn out, and have to be replaced. The Reports upon the condition of the swords and bayonets present some very curious results. It is sufficient here to say that the inefficient weapons have been replaced; and that it is intended in future, through the agency of the Inspection Branch, to examine the weapons in the hands of the Regular Army annually, and those afloat at the expiration of the period for which a ship is commissioned. It is hoped by these means to ensure their absolute efficiency according to any fair tests to which they may be snbjected.

II.

THE DEFENCES OF OUR PORTS AND COALING STATIONS.

For several successive years Votes have been taken in the Army Estimates for the works of defence at our coaling stations; and a scheme with respect to them has been accepted by Parliament, and is now being carried out. No public statement has, however, yet been made as to the defences of our ports generally, though it has been known, and was, indeed, explained to Parliament by the present First Lord of the Treasury, that a large expenditure thereon would eventually be required. In preparing the Estimates for the present year, the Government have felt it to be their duty to consider carefully the position of our defences in all parts of the Empire. There is, no doubt, a general feeling that the chief endeavour of this country should be devoted to ensuring the permanent superiority of our Navy; but that Navy, however strong, is deprived of a large part of its liberty of action unless the principal ports at home and abroad, available for coaling or refitting, are made so strong as to be reasonably safe—even in the absence of the Fleet—against any probable attacks. The difficulty of effecting this has been much increased of late years by the enormous range and power of the guns now carried, even by unarmoured cruisers. It is true that the development of torpedo defence, both from stationary points and from ships, and the improvements in submarine mining, provide a comparatively reliable and economical means of checking the approach of a hostile vessel. But, on the other hand, modern science furnishes the assailant with means of overcoming these obstacles, unless they are protected by a light armament of machine and quick-firing guns; whilst the great range, precision, and penetration of the new types of heavy guns absolutely require that all ports likely to be subjected to their attack should possess means of keeping them at a sufficient distance. Generally speaking, it may be said that the recent improvements in guns have completely altered the conditions and the power of a naval attack; and it has, in consequence, appeared to Her Majesty's Government that a thorough examination of the general state of our defences should no longer be delayed.

With these observations, I now proceed to deal separately with the various classes of places to be defended, adopting the somewhat illogical but convenient division between (A) coaling stations, (B) military ports at home and abroad, and (C) mercantile ports in the United Kingdom.

(A) COALING STATIONS.

First in order, I will take the defences of our selected coaling stations, both because these are the furthest advanced towards completion, and also because they have been subject to a more thorough and exhaustive scrutiny than has been the case with the other two categories of ports. In the proceedings of the recent Colonial Conference will be found, not only the principal portions of the Reports of Lord Carnarvon's Commission of 1879—which, for the first time, laid down a comprehensive scheme for the defence of the principal coaling stations of the Empire—but also a full account of the work now being carried out in consequence of those Reports. The Commission examined very carefully into the relative importance of the different coaling stations throughout our Colonial Empire, and ended by selecting those which are now being defended. For the present, at all events, I am of opinion that the list, as drawn up by them, must be considered, with one or two exceptions, as complete. Changes in trade routes, increase of population, or other circumstances, may, after a time, bring into special prominence places hitherto considered as of minor importance. But the points where works are now being executed were chosen after the most searching examination; and the primary duty of any Government at the present time appears to be to complete as rapidly as possible the task which has already been taken in hand. One very important addition to the list has, however, been made, to which I shall presently refer.

A scheme based on the recommendations of the Commission for the defence of our coaling stations was first laid before Parliament in 1884. Since then a fuller knowledge of the requirements of each place to be defended, and of the defences now thought essential by professional opinion, and still more the great cost of modern breech-loading armaments—at that time imperfectly developed—have largely added, as was foreseen by the Royal Commission, to the estimates of the necessary expenditure.

The addition to the list of stations drawn up in 1884, to which I have just alluded, is that of Table Bay. The original scheme laid before Parliament made no financial provision for the defence of this important harbour; but I venture to think that my action in including it among the stations to be protected will not meet with disapproval. This work, therefore, has also been undertaken, and an agreement with regard to it was entered into with Sir Thomas Upington during the Colonial Conference last year. Its execution has been expedited as much as possible, though the completion of the necessary works depends upon the Colonial Government.

With this exception, the programme which was prepared four years ago remains substantially unaltered, and has been carried out by means of annual Votes, which have averaged about £200,000 a-year.

The following table will give a clear idea of the work already done:—

Coaling Stations.	Works.				Armaments.		
	Estimated amount agreed to by Treasury and Colonial Governments.		Expended to 31st March, 1888.	Remaining to be expended.	Estimated amount agreed to by Treasury.	Expended up to 31st March, 1888.	Remaining to be expended by Imperial Government.
	To be paid by Colonial Government.	To be paid by Imperial Government.					
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Aden	64,500* (by Indian Government.)	64,500	42,300	22,200†	79,950‡	51,220‡	28,730‡
Trincomalee	..	25,000	16,500	8,500	11,080	11,080	..
Colombo	24,820	..	1,820	23,000	60,660	..	60,660
Singapore	81,000	..	76,850	4,150	120,614	87,204	33,410
Hong Kong	116,000	..	109,250	6,750	153,910	130,310	22,600
Simon's Bay	..	53,000	40,700	12,300	43,280	11,970	31,310
Table Bay	59,000	7,000	Expenditure not yet reported.	{59,000 7,000	75,000	42,950	32,050
Sierra Leone	..	30,000	30,300	..	15,000	10,840	4,160
St. Helena	..	7,000	5,600	1,400	2,400	2,400	..
Mauritius	55,000	..	12,800	42,200 (money voted.)	56,895	17,195	39,700
Jamaica	..	41,250	19,500	21,750	70,750	2,355	68,395
St. Lucia	..	30,000	..	30,000	18,500	4,000	14,500
King George's Sound and Thursday Island	To be paid by Colonial Government.	..	..	..	28,000	..	28,000
2nd class coaling stations§ ..	..	..	..	..	35,551	9,721	25,830
Further unappropriated expenditure‖	..	..	..	..	14,410	14,410	..
Total	400,320	257,750	154,900 200,720	103,150 135,100	786,000	395,655¶	390,345

* Figures (old-faced) represent the sums paid or payable by Colonial Governments.

† Outstanding accounts between the Indian Government and the War Office make us unable to guarantee the accuracy of this estimate.

‡ Same amount to be paid by Indian Government. § Including Esquimalt, Port Elizabeth, &c. ‖ For completing guns not yet appropriated to particular stations. ¶ Part of this may not be paid before 1st April, 1888.

From this table it will be seen that the Imperial expenditure remaining upon this service for works and armaments is £493,495. But this sum does not represent all that is necessary. It is much to be regretted that the original statement of the cost of protecting our coaling stations, which was made to Parliament in 1884, contained no allusion to certain items upon which outlay will be required. It made no provision whatever for the increased barrack accommodation necessary for the garrisons. At St. Lucia, for instance, where everything has to be created, the erection for the new defences, just about to be commenced, involves the simultaneous erection of barracks. At other places additions to existing barracks, or the adaptation of other buildings to the purpose, are required. It is impossible to form an absolutely accurate estimate of the sum required to complete the barracks necessary for the requisite garrisons for the coaling stations. The outside estimate of gross expenditure now before me amounts to £750,000. But the contributions from some Colonies, and the proceeds of the sale of properties to be vacated in others, have to be taken into account. I am, however, assured that the best estimate possible under the circumstances gives the sum necessary to meet immediate necessities, and without the expenditure of which it would be impossible to garrison our coaling stations satisfactorily, as £350,000.

Again, there is the submarine mining defence of these stations, and the light armament necessary to protect it. This work has been carried on steadily during the last two years; and has, at several stations, made very satisfactory progress. £165,609 has already been expended on this service, and in order to complete it, £66,451 for buildings, ships, and stores will be required.

Taking, therefore, the Estimates given above, we may assume that the minimum sum necessary from Imperial funds to place our coaling stations in a condition to properly resist the kind of attack they might anticipate in war is—

	£
Works and armaments..	493,495
Barracks..	350,000
Submarine mines, stores, &c.	66,451
Total	909,946

(B.) MILITARY PORTS.

These ports, at home and abroad, include the great military fortresses for the protection of our arsenals and dockyards and certain other places which require protection on account of their value to the Navy. The question of their defence has long engaged the attention of Parliament which, under Lord Palmerston's advice, provided large sums of money for their fortifications. It is, perhaps, characteristic of the want of thoroughness which has too often marked our military preparations, that the cost of the armaments, corresponding to these fortifications, which was to have been borne on the Annual Estimates, was not provided till a later period. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that these preparations, dilatory though they may have been, did for a considerable time answer the purpose of their author, and give protection to our Arsenals and Dockyards. But of late years the problem of the defence of fortresses has become more complicated. The power of the guns on board foreign ironclads, and carried even by comparatively small vessels, necessitates a partial and, in some cases, an almost complete reconstruction of our defences. Schemes have accordingly been prepared for the requisite alterations. They have been from time to time revised and extended; though the system of organization recently prevailing at the War Office seems to me to have been singularly ill-calculated to promote a comprehensive, and, at the same time, a critical examination of the whole subject. Eventually, the Estimates, prepared in full detail, which were presented to me in 1887, amounted to the following sums for the military ports:—

	£
For works	1,561,302
For armaments and ammunition ..	1,576,500
	3,137,802

To this must be added the cost of submarine mining defence—

	£	
Total Estimate	472,939	
Completed up to 31st March 1887	415,982	
Required to complete		56,957
Total		3,194,759

The amount therefore of, say, £3,200,000, may be taken to represent the total sum then put forward as necessary to place the military ports in a satisfactory state of defence.

(C.) MERCANTILE PORTS.

The examination which took place into the defences of our military ports led also to the consideration of the condition of the principal mercantile ports of the United Kingdom, some of which were wholly unprotected; while the remainder had to rely upon armaments rapidly becoming obsolete. The result of this inquiry, in which the Earl of Morley and Lord Wolseley took a prominent part, was the preparation of plans for the improvement of their defences. The Estimates for this purpose have not been worked out in the same detail as in the case of the military ports; but the figures laid before me in 1887 are as follows:—

	£
For works	735,000
For armaments	1,022,000
	1,757,000

To this must be added the cost of submarine mining defence—

	£	
Total Estimates	315,954	
Expended up to 31st March 1887	134,443	
Required to complete		181,511
Total		1,938,511

which may be considered as the expenditure then recommended for mercantile ports.

All these Estimates were based upon the prices current at the time they were made. They did not include any provision for guard boats, now recognized as an important factor in submarine mining defence, nor for the installation of the Brennan torpedo. Additions may probably have to be made for increase in barrack accommodation; though this is somewhat mixed up with the larger question of the reconstruction of some of our existing barracks, a work which cannot be very long postponed. Nor would it be right, in attempting a complete review of what lies before us, to omit mention of the fact that the maintenance of these works and armaments will necessarily involve an increased annual charge upon the Estimates of the year; although part of it, in the case of certain coaling stations, will no doubt be borne by the Colonial Governments.

The best mode of dealing with these very costly proposals was a difficult one to solve. In one case, that namely of the coaling stations, the examination already made by a Royal Commission has been so thorough, and the knowledge at my disposal so complete, that it has been possible to decide upon what should be undertaken without further inquiry. This cannot be said, however, with regard to the proposals for the defence either of the military or the mercantile ports. A scrutiny of these disclosed the fact that mixed up with demands of the most vital and urgent importance were proposed alterations, either comparatively unimportant in themselves, or to be introduced at places of minor consequence in the general scheme of the defences of this country. It, therefore, appeared desirable that such a comprehensive and business-like examination of these proposals should be made from every point of view, together with such a careful and independent consideration of the particular circumstances of each port to be defended, as would enable the Government to lay a scheme before Parliament, for which they could make themselves in every respect responsible.

The Government accordingly requested the following gentlemen to undertake, with the Secretary of State, the duty of making this examination:—

Sir Frederick Bramwell, M. Inst. C.E.
Sir W. H. Houldsworth, Bart., M.P.
Mr. J. W. Lowther, M.P.
Mr. S. Whitbread, M.P.
Mr. E. R. Wodehouse, M.P.
Mr. G. L. Ryder.

(representing the Treasury),

and (to represent naval and military opinion)

Lieut.-Gen. Sir E. B. Hamley, M.P., K.C.B.
and
Admiral Sir W. M'. Dowell, K.C.B.

This Committee held a large number of sittings, and made a minute examination of the subject. Their Report, omitting all detail of a confidential character, and shortly summarizing their conclusions, is now presented to Parliament.

It will be seen from this Report that the Committee, having considered the relative importance of all the proposals laid before them, determined to indicate the improvements which the evidence had shown to be, in the case of the military and mercantile ports, most urgently required.

They believed, and in this opinion they are supported by my military advisers, that it is not desirable at the present time to make public the details of the improvements proposed in our defences; but, having carefully examined into them, they recommended, unanimously and very strongly, that the most urgent works, at an expenditure of not less than £1,500,000, should be undertaken with as little delay as possible.

As regards the mercantile ports, they expressed the opinion that the work of submarine mining defence—for which, I am happy to say, the necessary volunteers appear to be readily coming forward in the localities where they are required—should be completed as speedily as possible, and protected, as in all other cases, by the necessary light armament of quick-firing guns. But they were also unanimously of opinion that, in undertaking any other works of defence necessary at these ports, the Government is entitled to expect the co-operation of the localities which are to be so largely benefited by the protection of their trade.

Since this Report was presented, which in its original form took place in the autumn, Her Majesty's Government have considered the whole question of the defences of our ports and coaling stations from the point of view of what is necessary, and what it is possible to do without loss of time; and the conclusions to which they have come may be stated generally as follows:—

(1.) That the works and armaments which are vitally necessary for the protection of our arsenals and our commerce should be at once undertaken, and prosecuted with the least possible delay.

(2.) That any scheme for this purpose should be submitted to Parliament as a whole, in order that the consent of Parliament having been once obtained, the necessary works may proceed without any hindrance.

(3.) That the whole of the expense of the lighter armaments, of ammunition, and other more perishable material, should be borne upon the Annual Estimates; while that of the works and buildings and of the heavier armaments is of a sufficiently permanent character to render it right to follow the general lines of the precedent of the Military Forces Localization Act, 1872, and, by placing the expenditure under statutory authority, keep it outside the ordinary Estimates.

The scheme which we now, therefore, submit to Parliament is based upon a programme which, we have every reason to hope, can be completed within three years. The time necessary for building and for the construction of heavy guns makes it improbable that any less period will suffice; but, on the other hand, we trust that the time named will not be exceeded, and every effort will be used to finish them as speedily as possible.

First, we propose to complete, as quickly as possible, the works and armaments at the coaling stations within the accepted programme; and, in addition, to provide the armament for King George's Sound and Thursday Island, which was asked for by the Colonial representatives at the recent Colonial Conference. In addition, the submarine mining defences will be perfected, and the absolutely necessary barrack accommodation provided.

We propose to undertake the most urgent requirements of our great military ports, in accordance with the general lines laid down by my Committee, and to complete the submarine mining defences.

And, lastly, we propose to finish the submarine mining defences of our principal mercantile ports, and to supply the light armament necessary to protect them.

The details of this scheme have been submitted to me by my military advisers. If it is to be completed within three years, it is absolutely necessary to commence operations as soon as possible. Indeed, in the case of one, and that the most important defect of all, we have not felt justified in delaying the attempt at a remedy, and the necessary works for this purpose are already in a very forward state.

The subjoined table shows the general character of the works which it is proposed to carry out.

	Estimated cost of works and buildings.		Estimated cost at present prices, heavy guns.	Estimated cost at present prices of machine and quick-firing guns, torpedoes, and ammunition.	Total.
	Defence works and buildings.	Barracks.			
	£	£	£	£	£
1. Military Ports—					
Portsmouth ..	78,410	..	106,370	167,965	352,745
Plymouth	103,590	..	78,940	51,500	234,030
The Thames .. The Medway ..	119,276	..	60,380	44,910	224,566
Harwich	21,630	..	23,440	22,440	67,510
Malta..	46,340	..	76,730	93,720	216,790
Gibraltar	26,300	..	51,635	29,935	107,870
Bermuda	16,193	..	..	6,120	22,313
Halifax	70,600	..	17,290	12,450	100,340
Minor Ports ..	33,701	..	17,390	30,050	81,141
Strengthening magazines.	95,000	..	..	..	95,000
Position - finding stations.	50,000	..	..	15,000	65,000
Minor services at various stations.	85,000	..	..	57,000	142,000
Total ..	746,040	..	432,175	531,090	1,709,305
2. Coaling stations	139,005†	350,000	220,265	126,455	835,725*
3. Mercantile Ports	92,405	..	..	141,885	234,290
4. For incidental works and armaments.	220,110	..	..	..	220,110
Grand total	1,197,560	350,000	652,440	799,430	2,999,430

* The difference between this amount and the sum of £909,916 shown in table on page 10 is caused by the fact that certain reserves of ammunition estimated for in the latter table are not included above.

† This includes submarine mining buildings.

The total sum to be provided will be seen to be £2,999,430, of which £799,430 is required for ammunition, submarine mining stores, and lighter armaments. This latter sum must be provided in the Estimates of the next two or three years. In the year 1888-9, £305,000 is included for this purpose; but the precise amount to be taken in each year depends upon the progress made with the manufacture of the necessary guns, which must be sent out with all necessary equipments. Proposals as to the means of providing the remaining sum of £2,200,000 will shortly be laid before Parliament.

It will be fully understood that the scheme now submitted does not pretend to be an exhaustive one, or to complete all the defences which the military authorities think necessary, and desire to see carried out. What it does aim at is to carry out, in the next three years, or, in other words, as quickly as possible, all the most urgent of these defences; while the very rapid progress of military science from the defensive as well as the offensive point of view, makes it, in our opinion, eminently desirable that Parliament should have the opportunity, before the end of that period, of judging of the results achieved, and of forming an opinion as to the further steps which may be necessary to give that security to our arsenals and our commerce which is essential to our national existence.

It only remains for me to explain what we hope to accomplish during the coming year.

We hope that all the guns required for the defence of the coaling stations, with the exception of two where the work is only just undertaken, will be ready to be sent out. The works, whose progress depends upon the Imperial Government, will be pushed forward with every endeavour, that they may all be ready for the guns when received. The programme for the coaling stations ought, therefore, to be very nearly completed. The remaining expenditure of the year will be mainly devoted to improving the defences of Portsmouth and the Thames.

III.

ESTIMATES.

The explanations already given will enable the changes proposed in the Estimates for the present year to be more readily followed. Speaking generally, the form of the Votes (except Vote 12) remains unaltered. In accordance with a promise made last year, tables are published as a supplement to the Estimates, showing the true cost of each separate service and institution connected with the Army. This has prevented the necessity of entirely recasting the present form of the Estimates, which was adopted as the most convenient for accounting purposes; but I should, in any case, have been reluctant to have introduced—while a Committee of Inquiry was sitting—any such vital changes in form as would have made a fair comparison with previous years more difficult than before. The information thus given for the first time will enable the cost of each special institution to be minutely examined. All the Votes, as to which practical suggestions of economy have been made, have undergone special and detailed scrutiny during the past year. That this has not been without result is shown by the fact that, although the numbers on the establishment are slightly greater than last year, no less than 18 Votes out of 25 show a reduction of expenditure.

The changes in organization already described have necessitated a complete reconstruction of Vote 12 for warlike and other stores, which in its old form was certainly not very intelligible. In order to maintain full Parliamentary control over the manufacturing departments, a separate Vote is submitted for the Ordnance Factories. The principle on which it is framed is as follows:—

The price of the articles produced by the Ordnance Factories will no longer be based upon what has been technically known as Balance Sheet No 1, but will be, to all the departments to which they are furnished, the actual cost of manufacture and inspection, with the addition of a percentage for depreciation of buildings and machinery. The Army, the Navy, the Colonies, and India, will advance from time to time to the Ordnance Factories the sums required for the manufacture of the articles ordered by them; and the balance only, being the cost of new buildings properly chargeable to capital, will be included in this Vote.

The new Vote 12 omits the cost of naval armaments, and of the establishments of the Ordnance Factories, and presents in a simple form the actual cost of all the armaments and stores supplied to the Army, either by the Government Departments or by private contract, and of their inspection. The organization required for some form of inspection has always existed, but from the way in which the Vote has hitherto been framed, it has been impossible to trace the gross cost of the inspection and proof of stores and armaments. These now appear on the face of the Vote, and the contributions for this service paid by the Navy, the Colonies, and India, are treated as appropriations in aid. I have been compelled to make two additions to it. The object of the first is to carry out the pledge given last Session, that all weapons in the hands of the troops shall be passed by the military authorities before being issued for service, and afterwards periodically inspected. And, secondly, the Report of Sir J. F. Stephen's Commission, and more recently that of the Judge Advocate General, have pointed out great imperfections in the inspection of leather goods, to which I hope to apply an effective remedy. The Vote is also swollen by the transfer to it of the cost of certain inspectors who have hitherto appeared under Vote 9. Lastly, it is attempted to show, in the case of all ordnance stores, the amount required for annual maintenance as distinguished from equipment and reserves. The net increase in the Vote this year is £97,624, which is entirely accounted for by the large amount taken for light armaments and ammunition at our principal ports.

The Works Vote (13) also is largely affected by the new scheme of organization. It shows a decrease of £122,312, but it must be remembered that the whole cost of buildings and repairs, for the manufacturing departments of the Army, has been transferred from this Vote to that for the Ordnance Factories; and also that the scheme now put forward for the improvements in the defences of our ports provides for the execution of all the works and buildings necessary for that purpose, but which hitherto have been borne upon this Vote. In order, therefore, to make a fair comparison with previous years, we must deduct from the net amount of this Vote in 1887-8—viz., £862,300—

	£
Cost of works at the manufacturing establishments, Parts I., II., and III.	96,688
Cost of works of defence and submarine mining buildings at coaling stations ..	77,200
Cost of submarine mining buildings at home	9,000
Total	182,888

Leaving a balance of £679,412, with which we have to compare the net amount taken in 1888-89 of £643,300. The true result, therefore, is a reduction of £36,112.

The only Votes which show a substantial increase are Vote 1, (£44,175), which is raised in consequence of the reduction in the Egyptian contribution (£90,000), which, however, is compensated for by reduced expenditure on other Votes; Vote 7, which is swollen by the increased capitation grant to the Volunteers and by other concessions amounting in all to about £65,700; and Vote 11, for which, owing to the larger stock of materials available last year, we are now compelled to ask an increase of £15,600.

On the other hand there are decreases to record on many Votes.

I stated last year that the general improvement in the education of the country was beginning to tell upon the special charges for this purpose in the Army, and it was therefore necessary to consider whether some economy could not be effected in Vote 14. The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State has examined the subject from all points of view with the assistance of a strong Committee, and has made recommendations which have been adopted.

For the regimental adult schools now existing, involving a schoolmaster on the establishment of every regiment, garrison schools have been substituted.

As regards adults, the compulsory system of education which, so far as the fourth-class certificate is concerned, has hitherto prevailed with very unsatisfactory results, has been abolished; every encouragement being given to soldiers to attend school voluntarily. The effect of this alteration in many cases already appears to exceed expectation. These changes will enable a reduction to be made in the number of Army schoolmasters and school assistants.

The elder children who have hitherto been taught by the regimental schoolmaster will in future attend the nearest garrison school, care being taken that they have not an inconvenient distance to walk. For the education of infants it is proposed to appoint the wives of non-commissioned officers as acting schoolmistresses at a reduced salary and without allowances or pension, instead of employing trained schoolmistresses to perform the very elementary work now required.

The Normal School at Chelsea has been abolished.

These, with other changes of less importance, have enabled a reduction to be made in the Vote for the present year, so far as Army schools is concerned, of £6,905 ; and it is expected that the ultimate saving will be very considerable.

I am also causing inquiry to be made into the administration of Sandhurst and Woolwich. The only decision which has hitherto been arrived at with respect to these institutions is that, on the occurrence of vacancies, the offices of Governor and Commandant will in both cases be amalgamated, effecting a saving of £2,900 a-year.

The cost of the Army Medical Department (Vote 4) has undergone careful examination ; the rapid growth of the charge for non-effective services having called special attention to the present system. The scale of remuneration now in force was adopted on the Report of a Committee, which sat in 1878, to consider the grievances of the department, and the disinclination of the profession to enter its ranks. But it is obvious that a system which offers inducements to officers to retire upon a pension, after only 20 years' service, is expensive to the State, and not even acceptable to that large section of the profession who, while feeling themselves unfitted for further service abroad, are ready and anxious to continue their duties at home stations. It is proposed to utilize in this manner the services of a large number of retired Officers, and further not to allow any Medical Officer to retire on the pension attached to his rank until he has served in it for a reasonable period. By these means a large reduction will be effected in the pension list; while, by extending the term of foreign service by one year, and by other steps now under consideration, we hope to make a considerable reduction in the establishment. For the present, therefore, all admissions to the Service are suspended, and it is probable that by the end of the financial year 28 Officers will have been absorbed. The net result this year is a saving of £19,100; but the effect of these changes, especially upon the Non-Effective Votes, will be more marked in future years.

The Vote for the War Office (Vote 16), in spite of the increased cost of the Intelligence Department, caused by the seconding of the Officers employed in it—a step very strongly recommended before the recent Parliamentary Committee—and of the transfer to that Vote of the charge for the Inspector General of Remounts, shows a decrease of £1,200. Any attempt to effect an extensive re-organization of the clerical staff at the present time would add largely to the pension list, and cause a large temporary increase of expenditure. The position of this establishment is well described by the Royal Commission on Civil Departments, who, in objecting to the great multiplicity of classes of clerks at the War Office, point out that it has resulted partly from frequent re-organizations, and partly from the automatic growth of salaries and pensions resulting from the introduction of a large number of clerks at the time of the Crimean War. The retirements, however, which will necessarily take place in the course of the next few years will admit of the formation of an establishment, less costly and more suited to the special requirements of the War Office.

The reduction just alluded to has been arrived at by a careful redistribution of work, and the automatic growth of salaries has been compensated for by a decrease in the establishment, the places of four higher division clerks, which fell vacant during the year, not having been filled up. But the actual numbers on the establishment cannot be sensibly diminished while the work remains unaltered. Whether some of that work is really necessary, or whether the numerous checks imposed at every stage of each item of expenditure, and the complicated vouchers insisted on for the most trifling amounts might not be dispensed with, at a great saving of clerical labour, and with no disadvantage to the public service, are questions which deserve the most careful examination, but which rest to a great extent with the Treasury.

So far as it lies within the power of the War Office, every effort will be made to reduce the amount of clerical labour required in the compilation of detailed accounts. For instance, it may be mentioned that by an alteration in the method of keeping the clothing accounts a great number of entries will be rendered unnecessary at a comparatively trifling loss to the State.

We hope also to be able to simplify very considerably the present system of accounts of Army Paymasters, by establishing a monthly account in the place of the present complicated half-yearly account, and by throwing some of the work hitherto done by Army Paymasters on the present Staff of the War Office.

The Vote for Military Law (Vote 3) shows a reduction of £3,600. The change in the office of Judge Advocate General will enable the separate establishment now maintained to be absorbed into the War Office. Economies have been effected in the management of the military prisons, two of which have been entirely closed.

It is satisfactory to be able to note a decrease of £61,000 on the Non-Effective Votes. This is partly due to the gradual decrease of purchase claims, and partly to the Warrant altering the age of retirement of Majors and Captains.

It is to be noted that considerable reductions in the Staff at Headquarters are taking place, some of which have already been alluded to. The offices of Surveyor General of Ordnance and Director of Supply and Transport have been abolished. The Assistant Director of Supply and Transport has become a Deputy Accountant General. We have found it possible to dispense with an Assistant Director of Military Education, a Deputy Judge Advocate, and a Deputy Surgeon General at Headquarters. A large number of minor Staff appointments have been reduced in various districts.

In conclusion it may be pointed out that, if there had been no increase in the Capitation Grant for Volunteers, and if the sum required for the defence of ports and coaling stations had not exceeded the normal amount of recent years, the present Estimates, though making provision for 276 more men, would have shown a decrease of about £300,000.

EDWARD STANHOPE.

27*th February* 1888.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

PROTECTION OF THE EMPIRE.

OBSERVATIONS.

CAPTAIN COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.) said, he rose for the purpose of calling attention to the growth of Army expenditure and to the relative decrease of Naval expenditure; and to submit a Resolution to the following effect:—

> "That it is desirable that this House, before having submitted to its consideration the Army Estimates, should be in possession of an explanatory statement from Her Majesty's Government, setting forth the general principles of defence which have determined the gross amount proposed to be allocated to Naval and Military purposes respectively, and indicating the main lines of the general plan, or programme, of British Defence, to which the Admiralty and the War Office administration, arrangement, and expenditure are respectively to conform."

He had modified the original Resolution by striking out the word "Naval," for fear it might be thought he was transgressing the Rules of the House by raising any question of naval detail on going into Committee on the Army Estimates. He would only point out that the total of the Estimates for defence was for naval and military expenditure, and if they deducted the military expenditure from the total only the naval expenditure was left. As a young Member of the House, he so much felt the gravity of the situation and the danger of our policy in this matter, that he asked the House to listen to him while he stated the reasons for having put the Resolution down. Before dealing with the subject, he desired to congratulate Her Majesty's Government, and especially the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope), on the information afforded to the House in regard to two great Departments—the Admiralty and War Office. He thought the country was indebted to the War Office and the Admiralty for having taken Parliament and the country more into their confidence in the last two Sessions than had ever been done before. The object of his (Captain Colomb's) Resolution was not to cavil at any action of the present or past Governments, but to ask for information, and to draw the attention of the House to matters which appeared to him to be of great importance. The Motion was to go into Committee upon the Army Estimates, upon an expenditure of nearly £17,000,000. He wished to point out that that represented a force of over 680,000 men, consisting of two parts—the Regular Army, available for general service, and the Auxiliary Army, which was limited to home defence. The Auxiliary Forces in these Estimates supplied a total force equal to 56 per cent of the entire number, and, therefore, exceeded the Regular Forces to which they were Auxiliary. From the Auxiliary he deducted the 30,000 Militia Reserve and added them to the Regular Army as part and parcel of our Regular Service. Now, what was the distribution of the Forces of the Regular Army? Roughly speaking, there was 36 per cent at home, 24 per cent in India, 10 per cent in the Colonies, 1 per cent in Egypt, and 28 per cent in the Reserves. We were told that we were in a better position than we were formerly, because we might be able to despatch two Army Corps to take the field if required. Consequently two Army Corps appeared to be the extreme limit of the national military striking power. Out of more than 680,000 men, which cost £17,000,000 per annum, the striking power of two Army Corps represented only 28 per cent of the total Regular Force at home, and 11 per cent of the total Military Forces on the Estimates. It was obvious that our military policy of self-defence was to "sit down and wait" if a great war overtook us. This was a policy without precedent in successful defence, and it was a policy contrary to our national experience and the traditions of the country in the past. It was a policy that we had gradually slid into, rather than directly formulated; because no Parliament and only one statesman had ever so laid it down. He should refer to the observations of that statesman in a few minutes. We seemed to have this policy nevertheless, for our military expenditure had grown while the striking power of that Military Force had shrunk. What he wished to bring before the House was that it was due to the fact that the country seemed to have lost faith in its own naval power, perhaps because naval power was more expensive than it used to be. The question was, what kind of Army did we want? He had high authority for asking that question—it was a question which only the House could answer. It was not one which the Military Authorities could answer, for Lord Wolseley, speaking on the 27th of April last, said—

> "Before the Military Authorities were called upon to provide an Army, they ought to be informed clearly and distinctly what kind of an Army the country wanted, and if that were done there would be no difficulty in providing the necessary force for the defence of the Empire."

Well, who was to inform the Military Authorities what kind of an Army we wanted but that House? The difficulty rested with the House of Commons and not with the Military Authorities, and he thought the real root of it lay in the system of Party Government. He ventured to submit to the House that we could not say what sort of Army we wanted without reference to our naval position, policy, and power, because, situated as we were, the naval question ruled the military question. Until they had settled the naval question, they could not settle what sort of Army they wanted, and the naval question was only to be determined by reference to three things—the physical facts of our position, the teachings of past experience, and the conditions of modern war. The teachings of experience in regard to England acting on the defensive were in a dim and distant past. Since then the facts of our position had materially changed, and to illustrate that he would divide the present century into three periods and give the rough results of a comparison between the three. He took three periods of 29 years. In 1801 the Army Estimates were £17,750,000; the Naval Estimates were only £500,000 less, being £17,250,000. That showed the sort of policy we were carrying out before we fought Trafalgar. He would point out to the House the very remarkable fact that although we fought Trafalgar and practically annihilated the Fleets of the two great European Powers opposed to us, our fathers, the year afterwards, added £2,000,000 to the Navy Estimates, and increased annual naval expenditure down to the battle of Waterloo, when it was £22,000,000. That illustrated the feeling that then prevailed. England, although triumphant, realized the enormous danger of maritime war and the great influence the element of chance might have. What was our position then? The population amounted to 16,000,000; our sea trade was a little over £4 per head; one ton of shipping entered and cleared at our ports in the year did the sea business of five inhabitants; one person only in 23 was fed on sea-borne food. In 1830, the last year of the first period, the population had increased to 24,000,000; the sea trade had risen to nearly £5 per head; one ton of shipping entered and cleared in the year did the business of four inhabitants; for every £100 spent on the Navy then, £105 was spent on the Army, but it was an Army that could strike. Coming to the closing year of the middle period, 1859, he found that the population had increased to 28,000,000; the sea trade per head had risen to £11 15*s.*; one ton of shipping entered and cleared annually did the business of only one inhabitant, and one inhabitant in three was fed on sea-borne food. It would thus be seen that gradually the interest of the people tended more and more seaward. What was the condition now in the closing year of the third period? The population had increased to over 37,000,000; the sea trade had risen to some £17 per head; each inhabitant employed one and a-half tons of shipping entered and cleared in the year to himself; some 20,000,000 of people were fed on sea-borne food, and for every £100 spent on the Navy we spent £127 on the Army. He had compared the first year of the first period with the last year of the third period, and he found that whereas we spent only £500,000 a-year more upon the Army in 1801 than upon the Navy, we now spent nearly £4,000,000 more upon the Army than upon the Navy. In other words, for every £100 we spent on the Navy at the beginning of the century, we only spent £103 upon the Army; we now for every £100 spent on the Navy, spend £127 upon our Military Forces. Whereas only some 700,000 inhabitants were in 1801 fed on sea-borne food, some 20,000,000 were now supplied from abroad. In 1801 the sea-borne trade per head amounted to £4 per annum; it was now £17. In 1801 one ton of shipping entered and cleared in the year did the business of five inhabitants; now each inhabitant required one and a-half tons to do his own annual sea business. That showed the enormous growth of our naval responsibility. But there was another point to which he desired briefly to refer, and it was this. The relation of extent of area to the amount of force required to protect it was the same upon water as upon land, and the area over which our sea interests operated in 1801 was illustrated by our export of produce. In the first period of the 87 years which had elapsed since the beginning of the century, five-sixths of our export trade was confined to the North Atlantic, including the Mediterannean and the Baltic; in the second period, four-fifths were so confined, and now only one-half. The other half of our enormous commerce now went to the other side of the world; and three-fourths of the whole sea area of the world had been added to our naval responsibility of defence. In point of fact, we had since 1801 added another hemisphere to be defended by our naval arrangements. But this was not all. He had hitherto dealt exclusively with the position of the United Kingdom then and now; but while these changes were going on our own position abroad was undergoing a still greater change, and the interests of our Empire beyond the sea must now be added to the British interests to be defended—the interests of that outlying Empire which had grown up since the beginning of the century. In 1800 the British trade meant the trade of the United Kingdom; but now it meant that of the independent trade of the outlying Empire also. The value of British sea trade was under £70,000,000, and now it was close upon £1,000,000,000. Whereas they had at the beginning of the century only £70,000,000 of sea trade, and a limited area to protect, they had now £1,000,000,000 of sea trade, and the whole water area of the world to protect. This distribution of British trade at this moment was not without interest and importance with regard to his Resolution. The sea trade of the Mother Country was over £600,000,000 a-year, and the sea trade of the outlying Empire, independent of that with the Mother Country, was £400,000,000. The tonnage entered and cleared in British ports abroad in any year was now greater than the tonnage entered and cleared in British ports at home. Thus had our sea interest grown, and our naval responsibility increased; but our policy and arrangements for defence had been to reduce the Naval Estimates and increase the Army Estimates for the "sit down and wait" policy. The time was when all our attention was directed to the naval safety of the State, and it was considered necessary for the country to possess an overwhelming naval power, with an Army prepared to strike, and not to sit down and remain passive. Our naval power was applied to keep the enemies battle fleet in port, or, if it got out, to compel conflict against great odds.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. and gallant Member is now entering into a subject which would more properly come in upon the Navy rather than the Army Estimates.

Captain COLOMB said, he was sorry if he had transgressed the Rules of the House. It was not his intention to do so, and this only showed the enormous difficulty of considering the question of defence. He would endeavour, as far as he could, scrupulously to obey the ruling of the Chair, and he would, therefore, pass by the arguments he was about to adduce. The conditions of war had changed. To whatever branch of service they referred, it would be found that there had been great changes. Preparations for war now took a far longer time, were more costly, but decisive results were sooner attained. The heavy guns which formerly only took a few days to cast now took months to manufacture. The Artillery, whether sea or land, which before could be formed in a few days, now took a very long period to ensure its efficiency, and it would appear, on comparing our position then and the relative expenditure for defence in the past with the present, that we had thrown aside the teachings of experience and the former national principles which carried us safely through war. We had been developing a theory of purely military defence, based on the presumption that it was necessary because of the weakness of our naval defence. At the first year of the last period —1859—we first took a definite new departure with regard to a military policy of passive defence; we appointed a Commission to investigate the defence of the United Kingdom, and to that Commission we assigned the duty of saying what was to be done under certain assumed naval conditions; but the assumed naval conditions had never been really examined or approved by the nation. The Commission had presented a Report, and upon that Report we spent a large sum of money upon fortifications, not only for the protection of the sea front of certain ports, which everybody must see was absolutely necessary, but for the protection of these ports from land attack. Therefore, the assumed naval conditions involved this—that the rear of our ports might be attacked—in other words, we admitted naval weakness. The point he wished to bring forward was this—that the Army and the military arrangements were only a part of their general scheme; that they could not tell what it was necessary to have, or what it was necessary to spend upon their Army, unless they had before them the whole necessities of their national position. Unfortunately, he was precluded by the Forms of the House from discussing the whole question. Therefore it was necessary to confine himself to the Army. But he maintained that they could not deal with the Army from that limited point of view, and that if they were to get economy and efficiency in their administration, it must be from a review of their whole position, and adapting their forces, whether military or naval, to suit the necessities of their position. He would not read what was recommended by the Commission of 1859, and which was in process of development down to 1870. In that year there was a considerable alarm in the country. War had broken out on the Continent, and the public mind was agitated and anxious about the situation of this country. He proposed to quote the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), not for any Party purpose, for he could not do so if he wished, seeing that the declaration which was made by the Head of one Party had never been controverted by the other. In the words of the Prime Minister in 1870—

> "Steam applied to navigation has done at least as much for a defending as for an invading Power; even the stores of coals needed for marine locomotion are principally ours, and while by aid of this powerful agent the ships of both nations may scour the coasts, with favourable weather, at from 12 to 15 or 16 miles an hour, the railways which gird the land—to say nothing of the telegraphs—may, in all weathers, carry the armies which are to guard it and their *matériel* from point to point at 20, 30, or 40."

The principle of defence was thus explained—that they were to meet the danger of a hostile Fleet scouring their shores by the use of an Army constituted and only adapted and capable of passive defence within these shores. That was the principle of the Estimates the House was asked to vote that day. He asked hon. Members to consider in what position, even if they had 10,000,000 men in the Army, the country would be under the circumstances he had described? More than 20,000,000 out of the 37,000,000 of the population would be entirely cut off from food. The absence of raw material, upon the manufacture of which 30,000,000 out of 37,000,000 inhabitants depended for their sustenance, would cause them to be thrown out of work, because that raw material could not come in, or, if it did, such a price would be demanded for it as to extinguish all profit, and therefore the mills would have to be shut up. Their foreign and coasting trade would have to be suspended; their Army would be unable to secure the ingress and egress at their mercantile ports, for, even though defended by the Army, they would be absolutely closed, and the moral effect he dared not speculate upon. Yet a defence such as this had been pictured by a Prime Minister of England as a cause of satisfaction. If ever it did come to pass, he (Captain Colomb) doubted whether the government of the country would be possible, and that was one of the points he wished to press upon the House, although he could not press it as forcibly as he should like without transgressing the Rules of the House. He could only indicate the point he wished to bring forward, and that was that the House was not in a position to discuss the Military or Naval Estimates until they had before them the general necessities of the position and the general policy which the Estimates were to carry out. He would conclude by pointing out the last result of the present policy and illustrate what was the effect of existing ideas on the subject of defence. In the Report of the Select Committee on the Army and Navy Estimates, there was an answer given by the head of the Intelligence Department of the Army. Question 4,247, Major General Brackenbury was asked—

> "And, as a corollary from that, I presume you think that our defensive condition should be made perfect?—I would then go on to say this; that I have not the slightest doubt that if our Channel Fleet were to be temporarily—for a period, I will say, of three weeks—made powerless, to be removed from controlling the Channel for a period of three weeks, a strong Maritime Power would be able to place, crowding them together on board ships for the short voyage, such a number of men that they might land or attempt to land a force of from 100,000 men to 150,000 men upon these shores."

What he wanted to point out was that whether an enemy could do this or not was not a military, but a naval question; and the answer itself was based upon the supposition that the assumed naval conditions existed for three weeks. He regretted that the Committee did not ask this officer to give the data upon which he formed his opinion, and did not ask him to state what ports he had in his mind from which the invading force could be despatched, the carrying power of the nation owning such ports, and the time it would take to collect it at such ports. He also regretted that so grave a statement in support of passive defence should have been accepted without proof and without inquiry. Assuming it to be true, what then? It meant that if, instead of this immense undertaking of embarking simultaneously 150,000 men, the enemy armed this vast multitude of ships—assumed to exist—with guns, torpedoes, and a handful of gunners and torpedoists, they might for three weeks swarm in the offings of our commercial ports. What, then, would be the value of passive military defence and defended harbours? Practically, the country would be absolutely invested, and three weeks of this condition of things would bring about the absolute necessity of a surrender without a single man having been landed on our shores. He would no longer trespass on the time of the House. He hoped he had said sufficient to indicate the impossibility of discussing the military policy and the Army military expenditure without some general statement before the House indicating the principle on which the State was to rely for safety, and the main lines of the policy by which it was to be attained. Such a plan would involve full naval and military considerations, and he thought there was a necessity for the country and Parliament being informed as to the general outline on which the Army and Navy Administration was to be framed. It was proposed to have the Army Estimates discussed by a Committee, who would, however, only deal with the military part, while the Naval Estimates would be referred to another Committee, who would only deal with the naval part. He thought they were working a system of national defence in two water-tight compartments without any real responsibility, and no central controlling authority for both. Our safety in war would have to be evolved out of dual control and divided responsibility. That was a serious question, and if the House would accept his Resolution, before sending the Army Estimates to one Committee and the Navy Estimates to another, the House could settle first what both were expected to do. The position of the House in discussing the defence question was that they were asked one day by the Secretary for War to put on red spectacles and only look at the Army, shutting out the Navy altogether; another day they would be invited by the First Lord of the Admiralty to put on blue spectacles and only look at the Navy, shutting out the Army altogether. He thought that was a most unsatisfactory state of things, and it was in the interests of the country and the interests of safety, economy, and efficiency, that they should have a statement from a Minister responsible to the country for its defence, and answerable for general principles, being followed both by the Army and Navy. He believed that would be the first step towards effecting those reforms which were necessary to provide for our safety in war, and also to insure the economy and efficiency of the Public Service.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. and gallant Member move the Resolution?

Captain COLOMB: No, Sir.

SIR. WALTER B. BARTTELOT (Sussex, N.W.) said, he had on the Paper a Resolution which was one of the greatest importance that could be brought under the notice of the House. The question was one the House ought to consider, and there ought to be no Member of Parliament, on whichever side of the House he sat, who should be afraid to get up in the present condition of affairs and state his views and opinions with regard to the defences of this great country. It was most certainly not a Party question. No military question and no naval question ought to be made a Party question, and the particular question he was about to bring forward was of such vital importance that he hoped for the indulgence of the House in making the statement he desired to lay before it. He said it was no Party question, and he was fortified in that opinion, because there was a meeting upstairs on Thursday last of the military and naval Members of the House sitting on both sides of that House, and they were all unanimously in favour of the Resolution he was about to submit. It was most certainly not intended that there should be any attack whatever upon the Government; but what would the people of the country know about the matter unless the real condition of our defences was placed before them? So far as the Government were concerned, they ought to feel obliged to any hon. Member who got up in his place and gave his opinion in order to show what was imperatively demanded for the safety of the country. Most certainly no attack was intended to be made on his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope). His right hon. Friend had placed before the House a most able statement of his views indicating what he intended to carry out. He had placed before them exactly what it was the Government intended to do; but without going into that question he (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) ventured to say that the Government were dealing with this great question piecemeal, and that they had only a plan for the present year, or for two or three years at most, without going to the root of the whole matter, and enabling Parliament to say whether there was any continuity of plan for the defence of the country to be carried out which would have his support. The Government proposed to raise some £2,000,000 or more of money only. He was satisfied that if the country knew the present condition of affairs and how defenceless we were at this moment, they would not only vote £2,000,000, but any reasonable sum, considering the enormous interests involved, that the Secretary of State came down and demanded. Unfortunately, the country did not know the condition of our defences, and, therefore, it cavilled at what Parliament was asked to vote. He was afraid that the country not only did not know, but would never know the condition in which our defences were placed, unless public attention was called to it by statements in that House. It was said that this was a great Constitutional question, and the power rested entirely in the hands of the Government, and that no one had a right to ask that it should be taken from them. It was an authority which they alone ought to possess. He denied that proposition absolutely, and when he came to look at what had been done in the past, what was our present position, and what might happen in the future, he thought he was entitled to ask that a Royal Commission should sit and inquire into the present state of our defences, and also what re-organization, if any, should take place in the War Office. At any rate, those military advisers who were now consulted and had now to state their views and opinions, and those who had been answerable in a time of war for everything being right, should have the responsibility of spending the money that was asked for in order to put our defensive forces into decent and good order. If that were done, and they were made absolutely responsible to the House, and could show that the money had been spent in the interest of the country, there would not only be greater efficiency but greater economy than we had now. There was, however, another question. No one knew what the defences of the country were, or how many men in a normal condition o affairs we ought to have. That was one of the questions which had often been asked and never answered. Parliament ought to know the number of men absolutely necessary, the quantity of arms in store, the quantity of ammunition, and the quantity of stores of all kinds. There ought to be no reserve in a matter of that kind; but the country ought to know whether, in a case of emergency, we possessed all the men and all the stores we absolutely required. It was also necessary to know the requirements of our naval and military ports. In the Report of the Committee appointed by the Secretary of State for War, and presented to both Houses of Parliament the other day, would be found a list of military ports. The Report was as follows:—

> "Among the so-called military ports three at once suggest themselves as far exceeding all others in importance. They are Portsmouth, Plymouth, and the ports included within the Thames and Medway defences. It is not too much to say that the destruction of our great Dockyard at Portsmouth—and in a less degree of that at Plymouth—might be decisive of the issue of a great war."

And yet the House of Commons was absolutely without knowledge as to whether any one of these ports was in a condition to resist the attack of an enemy. He maintained that that was a very serious matter for the nation at the present moment; and what would be the consequences to our Colonial ports if it were found necessary to keep our Fleet and Reserve at home to look after England alone, so as to meet any Fleet, of whatever size that Fleet might be, which might choose to threaten an attack on any of our ports around these Islands? There was another very important matter—namely, our coaling stations, for which a special Vote was about to be taken. He did not propose to enter into the condition of the different stations. Malta and Gibraltar formed the great highway to India, and in our interests in the Mediterranean it was absolutely necessary to maintain them. Was Gibraltar at the present moment fit to sustain an attack? He was told that there was only one gun there fit to cope with the guns of large calibre which large iron-clads carried now. What he asked for was that a Royal Commission should go carefully through the whole of these questions, and decide what should be the normal number of the men, and the necessary expenditure to be made upon our naval and military ports, coaling stations, and mercantile ports. These were very serious questions, and he should like, if the House would permit him, to read some of the evidence that was given before the Royal Commission on Warlike Stores presided over by Sir James Fitzjames Stephen. One of the questions which naturally occurred to hon. Members at the present moment was, how was it that, with the enormous amount of money voted annually by Parliament, we should find that our Army was not at the present moment in a far better state than it was? How was it that we found perpetual changes in policy? No single plan was carried out from year to year. The number of men was reduced to suit the interests of the Government and Party warfare, while the country was left out in the cold. He would soon show whether he had a right to make a statement like that. The first witness examined before the Royal Commission was his right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), then the Secretary of State for War, and this was one of the first questions put to him—

> "But his Colleagues, the other Members of the Cabinet, must have something to go upon when they say—'You must do without this or that improvement?'—Well, they never enter into the details of the expenditure; the whole responsibility for that rests with the Secretary of State.
>
> "I mean does the Cabinet say—'Well, you may arrange it how you please; but you must do with £500,000 less?'—Practically, that is very much the result.
>
> "After you have consulted upon the various grave matters which must regulate the taxation, the feeling of the House of Commons, the prospects of peace and war, and other things of that kind, it finally comes to this—that the Cabinet say—'Well, the War Department must take off £250,000?'—Substantially, that is the mode in which the result is arrived at.
>
> "Then, when the Secretary of State is told that he is to take off £250,000, or whatever it is, he has to take it off really from the elastic part of the expenditure?—Yes; he calls the officers of the Department round him, and asks for their advice and for their opinions, and he exercises his discretion and judgment.
>
> "He has to do without some of the things?—He might have to do without men, or he might have to do without stores of every description."

These were the answers of the right hon. Gentleman the then Secretary of State for War. In further examination the right hon. Gentleman was asked—

> "Practically, therefore, it comes to this—that when the Cabinet finally determines that the Secretary of State for War is to do with a smaller amount than he has proposed, it has all to come out of the elastic part of the expenditure—namely, the stores and the labour?—Or the men.
>
> "That would be the labour?—No; I am speaking now of the number of men voted. It might happen that there is a reduction of 5,000

> men in the Army; that is a mode in which economy, so to speak, has been effected."

That is the answer given by the then Secretary of State for War, who was truthfulness personified, and who, when asked by the Royal Commission to state his views, told them, as clearly as it was possible to state it, what his real opinion was. He (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) wanted to know if the country was to be placed in such a position that when, for political purposes, and for political purposes only, in order to please outsiders and reduce the Votes—he was not accusing one side more than another—they were to find that the men were cut down and the stores cut down in order to meet the cry for economy which had been raised. He did not propose to quote more from this Blue Book than he could help; but he felt that it was necessary, at the same time, that in an important matter like this every hon. Member should state what he believed to be the truth; so that they might all, upon an occasion like this, examine carefully into the matter as it stood. There was one other question which he desired to place before the House. His right hon. Friend the present First Lord of the Treasury was asked—

> "Does anything occur to you as capable of improvement in regard to the general system that you have stated—namely, putting it shortly, the Secretary of State with the ultimate decision, the Secretary of State with the Surveyor General under him as a practical officer advised by the Director of Artillery, and with the power of consulting the Ordnance Committee; can you suggest any alteration in the system?—I am not prepared to suggest an alteration in the system. I think it is possible that the office of artillery and stores might be strengthened; but that is a matter of detail. So long as our political system exists as it is, it does not appear to me to be easily practicable to make any considerable change in the system. Everything depends upon the individuals who have to work the system. If I was in the position which some Ministers of War occupy in other countries, with a power over the purse which I do not possess, and an uncontrolled responsibility which does not attach to me—for I am checked and controlled—I could imagine a better system than that which exists at the present time—a greater amount of freedom with an increased responsibility attaching to the Secretary of State. But, looking to our Parliamentary system, it does not seem to me practicable to introduce any great changes in the existing system.

He now came to the evidence of the hon. Baronet the late Surveyor General of Ordnance (Sir Stafford Northcote). The hon. Baronet (then Mr. Northcote) was asked—

> "I think you said that Vote 12 is by far the most important Vote that you have to deal with?—I think it is the most contentious. I think it is the one upon which more discussion usually takes place in the House of Commons than any of the others.
>
> "In fact, I suppose the two Votes which take the most consideration are Vote 1 and Vote 12?—Yes; of course, Vote 1 is the great Vote; I was only alluding to any special Vote.
>
> "Taking your business as Surveyor General of Ordnance, you have very little to do with Vote 1. You have to do with the other Votes, especially with warlike stores, Vote 12?—Quite so.
>
> "Is it not the fact, because we have had it stated before, that it is upon these two Votes, Vote 1 and Vote 12, that the manipulation of the Estimates usually takes place?—Yes; I think that is so.
>
> "That is to say, there are many charges which are fixed charges, and certain other things which are obliged to be done; but whether it is in the interest of the country, or whether it is not, when Votes have to be cut down, it is, generally speaking, upon Vote 1 and Vote 12 that the reduction takes place?—Yes; principally.
>
> "And although you yourself may have thought that it would be necessary that certain Supplies with regard to Vote 12 should be granted, yet in the exigencies of the case they are not able to be granted because you have not sufficient money?—Yes; that is so."

That was the evidence of his hon. Friend sitting below him, and was as truthful evidence as could be given. These were the facts of the case, and the House had to deal with them as they found them. He would turn now to the evidence of Lord Wolseley, who gave evidence before the Commission. The evidence of the noble and gallant Lord would of course be acceptable to both sides of the House, because the noble and gallant Lord had been appointed to very high commands by both Parties when in power. Indeed, he had been regarded as a military officer of a specially high type, and therefore he would read the evidence of the noble and gallant Lord with great confidence. Lord Wolseley, in answer to questions whether they ought not to have some standard laid down to work up to, said, "Yes; but at present they had none," and he suggested a Royal Commission. In answer to Question 2,643—

> "Do you think it would be an impossible thing, or even a difficult thing, if serious inquiry were made into the subject, to draw out some permanent system of the nature of that which you describe?—I think it would be a very simple process, a process that might be very easily accomplished by a Royal Commission of both Houses of Parliament, not constituted of military

men, but of judicial men who would look at it as a judicial inquiry, and examine experts on the various topics connected with the subject."

Lord Wolseley, in Question 2,764, was asked—

> "You made one very correct and at the same time strong statement, that the worst part of our system is that we never tell the truth so that the English people may know the position in which we are?—We never take the English people into our confidence. We never tell them what are our shortcomings; they have no means of ascertaining what are the military views of the highest military officers they employ. The highest military officers are employed and paid very well; but the English people have never the benefit of knowing what their military views are; as long as military men are employed in the War Office their tongues are tied. They are not allowed to express their opinions, even in ordinary conversation, much less in print, upon the most important subjects connected with the defence of the Empire.
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> "And is it not your view that until we get such a Committee, and until we have our Army and our stores in the position which you have named, we are liable to the greatest panics that can be imagined?—Yes; I consider that the position of England at the present moment, as regards its Army, is very unsatisfactory; that if a hostile force were to land upon our shores of, say, 100,000 men, there is no reason whatever, if that 100,000 men were properly led, why they should not take possession of London."

That was the statement of Lord Wolseley. The noble and gallant Lord made another statement in answer to a question from the Chairman of the Commission, 2,649—

> "The effect, therefore, is that when, for a very general political reason, it is desired to reduce the Estimates, the stores, men, and horses fall off?—Yes."

There were two or three other points which Lord Wolseley most carefully stated before the Commission; but his views and opinions distinctly were that it was absolutely necessary in the interests of the country that a Royal Commission, or a Committee as he called it, should be granted, and that before that Committee all the best experts in the Service should be brought, so that the requirements of the country might be made known. He felt sure those requirements would be granted, as well as the necessary money to carry them out. By the extracts he had given from the Blue Book of the evidence before the Royal Commission which sat to inquire into the condition of warlike stores, he thought he had been able to show the position in which the country was in and what Parliament had to deal with. There was another question. Going back to the Crimean War, would anybody say that the Government had in regard to the Army and Navy done their duty? When we went into the Crimean War we had made no preparation of any kind, either in regard to men or stores. The result was that we incurred a large, and what ought to have been, both in men and money, an unnecessary expenditure. Thousands of young soldiers lost their lives, and millions of money were thrown away. We were not prepared then in any one single point, and we had taken no precautions, believing that the necessity would not arise. Mr. Cardwell—afterwards Lord Cardwell—was, in 1870-1, Secretary of State for War. He passed the Short Service Act and formed a Reserve, but in doing so thought it absolutely necessary that those regiments which were first for duty should have their strength raised. A plan was prepared, but the Treasury would not allow the regiments to be raised to the number suggested by Mr. Cardwell. One of the small African Wars came shortly afterwards, and the consequence was that regiments were sent abroad short-handed, and then those which were first on the rota were called upon to furnish drafts for those regiments serving in Africa making them quite inefficient, though next for duty. In this way we went on from hand to mouth. He would instance another campaign—that which took place in Abyssinia in 1868. That campaign was organized by Lord Napier of Magdala. He believed that the right hon. Gentleman opposite the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) was on the Committee which sat to inquire into the expenditure connected with that expedition.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): No; I was not on that Committee.

SIR WALTER B. BARTTELOT: At any rate, the right hon. Gentleman would recollect the inquiry which took place, and would be aware that, notwithstanding the enormous expenditure which was incurred, the provisions which were made might have been altogether inadequate. It was a great expedition up to a certain point—namely, up to Magdala; but if King Theodore had not remained there, and had retired with his army, our troops could not have gone one step further, as there were not sufficient men to keep open the communications. He mentioned this fact to show that it was impossible in a time of war to be guided by an economical policy only. Whenever it was necessary to go to war we ought to be fully prepared. What happened in reference to the Egyptian War? We sent out an excellent army to Egypt, but we had to draw troops from India and to call out a portion of the Army Reserve; by that means denuding this country of its defenders. The number of men who went out to Egypt was considerable; but, at the same time, some of the Reserves went with them and the rest were called out for service at home, to make the regiments at home efficient. Not long ago it was thought that we intended to take a firm stand against the encroachments of Russia in Afghanistan. £11,000,000 was voted for that purpose, as well as for continuing the operations in Egypt. Most of the money, however, was devoted to replenishing our stores, which were in a most unsatisfactory condition. He could only say, and he thought he had a right to say it, that Party considerations were always considered before the great honour of the country. Let them for one moment look at the present condition of affairs; let them look at the enormous host of Russian troops echeloned along Bessarabia, Podolia, Volhynia and Poland, facing Roumania, Austria-Hungary, and Germany. Could anyone read the papers that morning, having regard to the statements of the Emperor of Russia, and say how long it might be before a state of things would arise which, as in the case of the Crimea, might drive us against our will and inclination at once into war? To go one step further—what was our policy now with regard to Bulgaria? They would all recollect the Bulgarian atrocities, which brought Russia to the gates of Constantinople, when we had to intervene. What was our policy now? Were we going to allow Bulgaria to be swallowed up by Russia, or was that young nation, rightly struggling for its liberty, still to have the sympathy and support of England? Was our policy still, as in the old days, to prevent Russia reaching the great goal of her ambition—the gates of Constantinople? To allow Russia to establish herself in Constantinople, so that we should not have a free entrance into the Black Sea, would be a fatal step in the interests of the British Empire, of which we were so justly proud. Russia had millions of men, some of them well armed, some of them badly armed; but there they were with 280,000 horsemen. France could put 2,500,000 men into the field, and could mobilize 1,500,000 more as occasion might require. Her fortresses were perfectly armed and provisioned.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): No.

SIR WALTER B. BARTTELOT: His right hon. Friend said "No." Would his right hon. Friend mention one fort which was not properly garrisoned and provisioned? He should like his right hon. Friend to state what towns in France were not properly fortified and garrisoned. It might be so in regard to one or two; it was certainly not the rule. So far as Germany was concerned, she could now put 1,280,000 men into line if she pleased, one-half on the frontier of France, and the other half on the frontier of Russia. She could produce 750,000 more within a fortnight to keep up the communications between the two Armies on the frontier, and besides that she could raise 750,000 more for her home defence. All her railways were complete; all her fortifications he believed were complete; and he did not think that his right hon. Friend would say that they were not all of them properly provisioned. He trusted that this country was not likely to have anything but the most friendly relations with Germany; but all we had to do was to be prepared for anything that might happen. He gave his right hon. Friend credit for having done a great deal more than his Predecessors. Nevertheless, what had been done fell very far short of what the country required. He asked his right hon. Friend how many field guns in case of a great emergency could be produced at this moment? His own impression was that, taking into consideration all the batteries which had been broken up, and the resolution which had been taken with regard to ammunition trains in connection with the formation of two Army Corps, we could not send out into the field 200 field guns. He asked if that were so or not? If it were true, it was out of the question that if we were to send these two Army Corps abroad, with the guns they required, we should have a single gun left for the home force to whom the defence of the country would have to be entrusted. At the lowest calculation we ought to have at this moment at least from 500 to 600 field guns for the 500,000 men of the Regular and Auxiliary Forces we had at home. At Sedan—when the German Emperor showed the Emperor Napoleon the case of iron which surrounded that position—the whole work was over, and the slaughter stopped, because it became at once apparent how hopeless it was to make any further resistance. He thought that was a case which deserved the most careful consideration. He had looked through his right hon. Friend's Statement most carefully, and he had endeavoured to find whether there had been any increase in the Estimate, but he found no increase whatever. He did find a statement that, considering the defenceless position of the forts at certain stations, it was absolutely necessary that more Garrison Artillery should be got.

Mr. E. STANHOPE said, it was explained in the Statement what this Garrison Artillery was required for.

Sir WALTER B. BARTTELOT said, there was undoubtedly a very small increase in the Estimate of the number of Garrison Artillery, and he wished to know for what purpose it was required? He considered it absolutely essential for the welfare and the well-being of the country that we should have in all our fortifications, and at our coaling stations and elsewhere, such a force as we could rely upon. He did not want the Navy to be obliged to go out and look after the coaling stations. He knew the necessity of the coaling stations in the interest of our food supply, upon which the great masses of our people depended. They ought, no doubt, to be in a better position to feed themselves, but, unhappily, at this moment that was not the case. He should like to call the attention of his right hon. Friend to some statistics that were given in an admirable work written by Sir Charles Dilke, showing the proportion of men and field guns possessed by different countries. Belgium, with 105,000 men, had 240 guns; Servia, including the National Militia, had 175,000 men and 200 guns; Roumania 200,000 men and 336 guns; and Switzerland, 215,000 men and 348 guns; and yet, in this country, we could not put two Army Corps in the field without denuding the country of its 200 field guns. Turning to the question of the rifle, his right hon. Friend was no doubt quite right in not adopting a rifle until he was quite certain that the weapon was the best that could be produced. He believed his right hon. Friend was now making inquiries in that direction, but what was to happen when the best rifle was discovered? It was to be manufactured only for the Army, and not for the Militia or Volunteers, so that it was impossible to foretell what might happen if ever it became necessary to call all our Forces into play. He was afraid that the same thing would occur here at home as occurred in the Soudan. Shells were sent out without powder in them, and other shells which did not fit the guns. Above all, Parliament had a right to know how many arms we had in store, and he maintained that that information would never be supplied until a Royal Commission inquired into our position with respect to bringing this question before the House. He felt that he had simply done his duty. His object was to place the facts before the country, and he trusted that his statement would be amplified by other hon. Members who would follow him. He had read with pleasure and gratification the remarks which had been made by Sir Charles Dilke, who was a Radical at heart. That gentleman knew France well, had lived in it for years, and he told his countrymen as frankly as a man could tell them that we were in a most defenceless position, and that the position we occupied was one that was not creditable to the nation. He recommended hon. Members to read the statements made by Sir Charles Dilke which showed the condition of our Army and Navy. The highest military authorities—such as Sir Frederick Roberts and Lord Wolseley, and his hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Sir Edward Hamley) who made an admirable speech last year—clearly showed what the condition of affairs was, and how absolutely defenceless we were in the event of being attacked. If the enemy by any evil fortune should come here and take possession of London, how many millions would be demanded in the shape of ransom? [*Laughter.*] He saw an hon. Member laugh. He would be the very man, if such a thing should happen, to fall into a panic and lose his head. Now was the time, when we were at peace with all the world, to consider what ought to be done. He remembered some very weighty words that were used by the Prime Minister of this country. At Derby the Prime Minister said, "Your fate will depend upon the preparations you have made in time of peace. He recommended that statement to his right hon. Friends on the Front Benches, and he asked them to consider the question fairly and honestly. He had been for many years a Member of the House. Could it be supposed that if he did not believe the gravity of the situation and the necessity for action that he would have offered these remarks? He believed that it was absolutely necessary and essential that we should know the exact position in which we stood. He was satisfied that if money was required the country would freely grant it, and if the Government, in any attempt to deal with the defences of the country, were blamed, they would feel that in making preparation for a time of need they had done their duty to their country. Let him say in conclusion—May God grant that should the evil day come we may be found prepared. He begged to move—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that, in order accurately to ascertain our position, She may be graciously pleased to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into and report upon the military and naval requirements for the protection of the Empire."

Lord HENRY BRUCE (Wilts, Chippenham), in seconding the Amendment, said, he had to complain of the issue of different kinds of rifles to the Army. They ought to have the newest and best weapon for their troops. As to stores, he also pointed out that there were defects, and in this democratic age the country would never tolerate another Crimea. If a calamity like that occurred it would shake the country to its foundations.

Sir WALTER B. BARTTELOT said, that in accordance with the view of the Chair he would withdraw all reference to the Navy from his Motion.

Motion amended accordingly.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty praying that, in order accurately to ascertain our position, She may be graciously pleased to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into and report upon the requirements for the protection of the Empire."—(*Sir Walter Barttelot.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Sir HENRY HAVELOCK-ALLAN (Durham, S.E.) said, he rose with considerable pleasure to support the Motion, as modified, proposed by his hon. and gallant Friend the Member for North-West Sussex (Sir Walter B. Barttelot). He did so with more pleasure now that the words "and naval" had been struck out, because there could be no doubt that, technically, it would not be right to raise the question of the naval resources of the Empire on the Army Estimates; but he should have been prepared to support the Resolution, whether the words had been struck out or not, because he was persuaded, from circumstances which had lately occurred, that there was no question more vital to the interests of the country at this moment than that our naval and military resources should be referred to some independent Body, independent both of the House and of the Principals of Departments employed in supplying those Departments. He could not but hope that the rumour which had reached him would not turn out to be unfounded—that before the end of the discussion, which he was afraid would be somewhat prolonged, they would hear from the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) that he was able to see his way to accede, in some shape or other, to the request of the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North-West Sussex—namely, that the condition and power of expansion of the resources of the country, from a military point of view, should be made a matter of inquiry by some great and independent authority. Before proceeding to deal with the necessity for an inquiry, he might be permitted to say that nothing was further from his intention than of, in the slightest degree, hampering the Government, or of tying the hands of the Secretary of State for War, or in any way unfairly criticizing any of the changes which they were happy to see the right hon. Gentleman had made during the last 12 months. He believed the Secretary of State for

War had already more than fulfilled the anticipations which were formed last year as to his probable action; the steps he had taken had been almost, without exception, in the right direction; and no doubt, when he came to have a longer experience in his Office, he would show that confidence had been very rightly reposed in him. He (Sir Henry Havelock-Allan) considered that we were now entering upon a happy period of wise and decisive military change; but there were blots on every sun, and, touching for a moment points of detail before he dealt with the general Resolution before the House, he should like to say that in one or two things he was extremely disappointed with the Estimate presented to them. The House would recollect that last year they were much exercised in their minds in regard to the question of the reduction of the Horse Artillery. He hoped the Government would take warning from what happened last year; many Members of the House would have been pleased to test the matter by taking a Division, because they thought that the reductions made were unwise, and were not justified by the reasons put forward for the step. He trusted they would not be put to that shift to-night; but he would recall to the right hon. Gentleman that which was, to some degree, the tacit understanding on which he, for one, voted for the Government last year. He understood that the reductions which were made in the Horse Artillery—a branch of the Service which everybody in the House and in the country agreed was one of the most highly scientific and efficient, both from a military and an economical point of view—would be more than counterbalanced by some large increases in other branches of the Artillery. He had searched the Estimates, and the explanatory Memorandum which the right hon. Gentleman had issued, but had been unable to find what the corresponding increase in the effective force of the country was. It was with much reluctance that hon. Members consented to a large reduction of that brilliant force, the Horse Artillery; but they were told that they were to have in place of it a very large expansion of the Field Artillery of the country; they were told that they were to have a large expansion of the Military Transport Corps; that they were going to have 14 ammunition columns formed; but he could find no reference to these columns in the Estimates. Perhaps, before the discussion ended, they would receive some explanation upon the point. Upon another question of detail he found in the Memorandum points which to him had rather a suspicious sound. They were told that the intention of the Government and of the Secretary of State for War, an intention with which he (Sir Henry Havelock-Allan) entirely acquiesced, was that we should have two Army Corps and a Cavalry Division ready for mobilization. He could not say how strongly he would advocate that measure being carried out in its entirety. He found every detail given as to the efficiency of the First Army Corps; as to its Infantry battalions and its adjuncts; but he found nothing of the sort with regard to the Second Army Corps. He found only that the units existed somewhere; there was nothing shown in detail as to the mode of expanding the units. The First Army Corps was supposed to consist of eight battalions at home, exclusive of three battalions of Guards and the five battalions at Gibraltar and Malta, which were supposed to be in readiness for immediate service, and which, taken altogether, constituted the Infantry of the First Army Corps. These units were in a fair state of efficiency. The three battalions of Guards, for instance, had, under the present short-service system, a mode of expansion of their own which was so admirable that he wished the system were extended to the rest of the Army. The system observed in the Brigade of Guards had been to reduce the term of service from seven years to three, and to allow the men to spend the remainder of their service in the Reserves. He might say—not, of course, for the information of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War, but for the general information of the country—that that system had been most wonderfully effective, and that whereas the battalions of Guards had a strength of 750 each, they had in addition, by the operation or expansion of the short-service system, a reserve of their own numbering about 3,000 men —that was to say, that they were able to fill up their battalions with men who had already belonged to the Brigade.

He was glad the right hon. Gentleman was about to develop the system by applying it to other arms which did not serve in India, and to which the system of short service could best be applied. He (Sir Henry Havelock-Allan) would like to know by what means the right hon. Gentleman proposed to expand the 21 battalions which were to constitute the Infantry of the Second Army Corps? For every one of those battalions there would be at least 200 men required who could only be taken from the Reserve or from regiments at home. He did not know whether the redistribution of the Infantry was the wisest which could have been made. Formerly there were no less than five different scales, ranging from 920 to 550; undoubtedly, the battalions upon the smaller scale were too weak, and there were obvious reasons why they should be strengthened. It appeared to him that the right hon. Gentleman had gone a little too far in the other direction. It stood to reason that whenever the Second Army Corps was called upon, the 21 battalions would have to be reinforced by at least 200 men, and perhaps by as many as 400. He saw considerable reason to apprehend great weakness and great difficulty in an arrangement of that sort, and he did not know whether it would not be better if the right hon. Gentleman were to recast his scheme so far as to have, at all events, one-half of the battalions of the Second Army Corps in the highest degree of readiness. In the same way, as regarded the Cavalry, last year he drew the right hon. Gentleman's attention to the difficulties which existed in the present machinery for the expansion on short notice of the Cavalry service. The right hon. Gentleman had raised the Establishment of certain regiments by 44 horses and a corresponding number of men; but he (Sir Henry Havelock-Allan) did not see that the right hon. Gentleman had dealt with a subject which was of primary importance—namely, the general re-organization of the Cavalry, which would enable him to readily expand that branch of the Service on a great emergency. He believed the right hon. Gentleman would find that there was no arm of the Service which would respond more readily to anything that was done in the direction of giving increased efficiency; and he hoped that when the Army Estimates were produced next year, they would find that the whole Cavalry system had received the attention of the Secretary of State for War. There was another point deserving of consideration, and that was the means of suddenly finding a useful adjunct to our small Cavalry force by a greater development of the system of Mounted Infantry. The right hon. Gentleman had already taken a great step in advance by the course he had pursued at Aldershot in respect to providing Cavalry adjuncts. He had also taken a step in advance by putting a greater amount of responsibility, which also included a greater degree of power, in the hands of the Military Chiefs of the Army. The right hon. Gentleman had, for instance, put the transports and supplies under the Quartermaster General, instead of retaining them under the Civil Department of the War Office; that was a change in respect of which nothing could be said but in praise. There was another change which the right hon. Gentleman had made, and which was an essential feature of his scheme, but the result of it could only be judged by experience; he (Sir Henry Havelock-Allan) thought its success was somewhat questionable. That change was the abolition of the Office of Surveyor General of Ordnance. The hon. Baronet the Member for Exeter (Sir Stafford Northcote) had set an example of patriotic abnegation in this matter which could not be over-estimated; he had allowed the Office he held to be abolished in the interests of the Army and of the country generally. He (Sir Henry Havelock-Allan) doubted whether it was wise to do away with the Office of Surveyor General of Ordnance; they had now two military heads of the great branches of the Army, the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General, working under a Chief; but they had nothing which corresponded in the smallest possible degree with what he might call the intermediate position between the Financial Secretary and the two military heads. The recommendation of Sir James Stephen's Committee was not that the office should be done away with, but that it should be put into the hands of a military man; and he believed that if that recommendation had been carried out, it would have been a far better change than that which the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War had determined upon. There were many military men who were perfectly competent to fill that position with credit to themselves and advantage to the country; indeed, he need not go farther than to say that the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Birkenhead (Sir Edward Hamley) was an officer well calculated by his wide experience to discharge the duties of the Office faithfully and well. He quite agreed that the holder of the Office should be a military man who had a seat in the House of Commons. Having said so much as to detail, he might be allowed to give the reason why he was heartily in accord with the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North-West Sussex (Sir Walter B. Barttelot), whose Resolution was now before the House. The hon. and gallant Baronet asked the House to allow the whole question of our military resources to be examined by a competent tribunal which would be independent and apart from this House. That was also the recommendation of Lord Wolseley, a great and distinguished soldier, whose opinion could not be supposed to be biassed by any personal feeling at all. If there were any great changes at all in the military system, they must carry popular opinion with them, they must carry the constituencies with them, and that could not be done with the present mode of dealing with the three great branches of military defences. The three great branches of our defensive resources consisted of the Army, Navy, and the Indian defences. These were intimately connected with each other, for it was impossible to say how interlaced and intertwined one was with the other. Questions were constantly arising in the one branch or the other which ought to be considered by someone who could take a purview of the whole. The supporters of the Resolution simply asked that, considering how widely spread these three branches were, considering that it was impossible for any one Department of the three to deal with any but its own branch, the whole question of our resources should be referred to an independent tribunal, not for Executive purposes, but for the purpose of ascertaining in gross what it was we required, and for familiarizing the country with our requirements, and, therefore, allowing us to have popular opinion and support at the back of such increased demands as the best and most competent authorities might desire to make. Take, for instance, the case of our Imperial defence. Our Imperial defence was not confined to our Army. As we lost our insular position and came to regard our Indian possessions, the question branched out and became one to be dealt with by those who had an entire view of the military as well as the naval requirements. Our Colonial defence could only be conducted by the Navy and the Army combined. If any large developments were to be made, they must be backed up by popular opinion. To go a little into detail, he was bound to admit that he felt a very great responsibility in this matter, for three reasons. The first was that since the institution of the short-service system in 1871, he had been one of those who had warmly espoused the cause of short service. If Lord Cranbrook were in the House, he would recollect that in 1874 he (Sir Henry Havelock-Allan) begged the noble Lord not to make any great or sweeping change in the principle of short service until it had been submitted to a thorough investigation. We had now reached, however, a period when we could see whether the system had answered to expectations or not. They were told by those who advocated the system in 1871 that it would give them an effective Reserve of 160,000 trained men. He pointed out in 1876 that, from causes which were on the surface, the Reserve would never reach more than 45,000 or 50,000 men; and now, after an experience of 15 years, they found that that was the result achieved. By these Estimates, public attention was directed to the fact that the Reserve had now reached a maximum of 51,000 men, and that the passage of 8,000 men to the Reserve would be more than compensated for by the discharge of an equal or larger number of men. Therefore, at all events in this year, and in the next year, and, perhaps, the year after that, there would be no development of the Reserve. Thus we had reached a period of progress when we might look back on the Reserve system, and see what it had done for us and what it had failed to do for us. There was another important branch of the subject, and that was the social condition of the men of the Reserve. The great bulk of the 51,000 men were now wandering about the country in the painful condition of waifs and strays. From long personal experience he knew that, in the present depression of the labour market and in the present depression of our trade, men in every employment were being discharged, and the Reserve men were those who suffered most. Our Reserve men were in a condition but very little above that of paupers. That was a discredit to the country, and he trusted some step would be taken very shortly to remedy that great defect. As regarded the Militia, which was the next branch of our defensive force, the painful fact came out year after year that it was dwindling in numbers. The Inspector General of Recruiting mentioned that this year the enlistments were 1,700 men less than last year. But that did not represent the decline altogether. Last year 17,000 men had failed to appear at the annual trainings. The Establishment of the Militia was 113,000; and if they struck out 17,000 who failed to appear, and 31,000 who were in the Militia Reserve, they would find that if the Militia were called out to-morrow to reinforce the Army, nearly 40 per cent of the whole would not be found. Then, as regarded the Volunteers, he was happy to say that the numbers and efficiency were increasing year by year; but if they supposed that the Volunteers were filling a position in the defensive force of this country which would enable them to be of great importance to us in case of foreign war, we were very much mistaken. It was because he believed that the people of this country were misinformed as to the office which each part of our military resources had to play, and as to what we could reasonably expect from it, that he thought a general inquiry should be held—an inquiry which would make every detail of our military organization familiar to the electors of the country, who might, therefore, give them their support when great changes were contemplated. He had the pleasure and advantage, a few days ago, of listening to the discussion at the United Service Institution, in which the work, merits, and defects of the Indian Army were brought out in striking light. As regarded the Indian Army, he believed that the changes made of late years had had the effect of rendering it, for its numbers, more efficient than ever it was before. But there was a great change—a political change, it might be called—with regard to that Army which had been on the carpet for 25 years past, and which, if made, would, in the opinion of the best military authorities, render that Army by no means such an effective assistance to us as we supposed it would be in the contingency of a great European war. The enormous reserve of officers we had in the Indian Army had entirely disappeared; that was a question of vital importance. These men, for their numbers, might be as efficient as they could be; their patriotism, their earnestness, and zeal was everything that could be desired; but the organization under successive changes, made by successive Governments—all because we had no such thing as continuity of military policy—had been such as to deprive the Indian Army of any reserve of officers, and if we were depending upon that Army in time of need we were depending upon a broken reed. It was sometimes said that we had lost weight in the Councils of the world. He had before him some opinions uttered by a distinguished German officer. The disparaging opinions which this officer formed of us arose solely from the fact that the whole of our resources were never dealt with as a whole. In Germany they had just the opposite state of things. We, of course, did not aspire to imitate the German nation in military matters, because they were beset with dangers on the right and on the left, and, therefore, the whole population was armed for the purpose of defence. What he complained of was that we had nothing corresponding to that in this country; and so long as the present system continued of dealing with the requirements of each of the three branches—the Army, the Navy, and the Indian Service—each on its own lines alone, we should never have a corresponding advantage. He had read the excellent articles of Sir Charles Dilke on the Armies of Europe. Sir Charles Dilke viewed the matter from a different point of view, but came to the same conclusion that he (Sir Henry Havelock-Allan) came to, and that was that, in spite of our Reserve system, and in spite of the development of our military system in many respects, our great and most serious difficulty had never been touched at all, and that the total number of men we could muster was not only ludicrously inadequate for Imperial and Colonial wants, but that it would not carry us through a war of three months' duration. If there was any semblance of truth for these opinions, a case had been made out which required the earnest attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, who, he hoped, in this matter would not be influenced at all by any section of opinion—by, for instance, the Secretary of State for War on the one hand, or by the First Lord of the Admiralty on the other. He could not suppose for one moment that anyone would maintain that the two Gentlemen he had mentioned were the proper tribunals to settle a great national question like this. Military and naval Members of the House had great responsibilities to discharge; they were sent to Parliament by their various constituencies with the implied understanding that they would do all they could to further the Imperial interests of the country, and to see that the nation got their money's worth. They endeavoured to discharge that duty; but they could never do it by criticizing the Army or Navy Estimates alone, or by discussing the Estimates for the Indian Service alone. They never would be able to do that until they had raised, by some means or other, an opinion that matters were not altogether right in the sense that they were not dealt with by a separate and large tribunal which took a view of the whole system. He believed it was the opinion of every military man—Sir Charles Dilke was not a military man, but he was a highly trained politician who, perhaps, more than any other man in the country, was acquainted with what our requirements were in consequence of the great developments of the Continent, and he came to the same conclusion—that until they had the support of the nation at their back, and until they had developed some system of universal military training, the requirements of this country with regard to Imperial and Colonial defence would never be fulfilled. In 1876 he had the honour of serving on a Committee which had several changes in the Army referred to it, and among other questions was that of the possibility, under certain circumstances, of reverting to the old system of balloting for the Militia or a modified form of conscription. He produced before that Committee evidence showing that where a ballot for the Militia, together with the money substitution, was allowed, the one killed the other, and balloting for the Militia became invalid. Militia substitutes were purchased at a great rate—as high as 60 guineas a man—and that killed recruiting for the Army then employed under the conduct of Wellington in the Pensinula. Did anyone suppose that this country would permit for a moment the revival of such a system? If that was so, we were still leaning on a false hope and were still living in a fool's paradise. Under no conceivable circumstances would the ballot for the Militia ever be tolerated in this country again. There was now a large electorate and a democratic form of government. Was it to be supposed that if there was balloting for the Militia money exemptions would be tolerated? If they came to make a demand on the people, the first thing the people would demand under a democratic form of government would be that there should be no destinction whatever, that money substitutes should be entirely done away with, and that the son of the duke and the son of the labourer should serve in the ranks side by side. Was it not possible to devise some scheme by which, instead of going against popular sentiment, they could carry popular sentiment with them? Was it not possible that by a wise development of our resources we might have a larger number of men trained who might be brought to the military assistance of the country if required? He could conceive no better tribunal to which the question could be referred than a Royal Commission. The question to be decided was how they were to reconcile the military requirements of the country with the democratic feeling which existed nowadays, and the longer they deferred the consideration of such a question the longer they would be living in a fool's paradise, and the crash must eventually come upon them in such a way that it would be dangerous to the foundations of the Empire. He believed that a system of universal training might be devised which would not only be popular but which would be demanded instead of resisted by the democracy. The Reserve system, which had cost the country millions sterling, had reached its utmost point of expansion. We were obliged to take men into the Reserve who had 17 years' service in the Army. In that degree the system did not differ from the old service in which we kept men in the Army for 16 and 17 years and then discharged them. He had the honour of being continually brought in contact with one of the most democratic constituencies in the country, and he could say that if such a tribunal as a Royal Commission were allowed to investigate the question of the power of expansion of our military resources, taken as a whole, it would very soon arrive at the result that a system of universal training could be devised which would not be uncongenial to the labouring classes, but actually demanded by them. The Volunteers were kept up to an effective strength of 230,000 or 240,000, but from their very constitution they could not be called out in case of a foreign war. From every point of view a large development of the voluntary military system was absolutely necessary. He had the pleasure and privilege of passing many months during the hot summer of 1877 with the Russian Army in the field, and he could bear witness that the Russian soldiers were almost matchless for their enormous enthusiasm and their great patriotism. They were taken from a population which numbered 80,000,000, and therefore the power of expansion which the Russian Army possessed was almost unlimited. Russia had an effective force of very nearly 4,000,000 of men, and a gradual development of her system of communication had brought her to our very doors, so to speak. There were people in this country who supposed that the delimitation of the Afghan Frontier would be security for us in the future, but that delimitation was the very thing which would compel this country some day to come actively to the assistance of the Ameer at Cabul. We ought to be prepared for such an event, and not allow ourselves to be taken unawares. To return to what he had previously referred to, let him say he had found, in appealing to a democratic constituency that the one thing of all others which the people desired was free education. He was persuaded that means could easily be devised whereby the children of the working men of the country could be given an absolutely free education, beginning at the age of 10 years, and going on as long as desired. And then if they provided for the people from 15 to 21 years of age free technical education, combined with a certain portion of military training, such a project would be readily accepted by the working class, because they would feel it was one which was not beneath their dignity to accept.

Sir EDWARD HAMLEY (Birkenhead) said, that it so happened that both the present Resolution and the former one had so much in common with the Memorandum and Report which the Secretary of State for War had laid before the House, that they all related to that most urgent question—the defence of the Empire. That brought with it the great advantage that the debate on military subjects, instead of being diffused, and one might say lost, over a vast variety of matters, was directed to a practical end. The Secretary of State for War proposed, after reference to the Report of his Committee, to complete the fortifications of Portsmouth, Plymouth, and the Thames, of Gibraltar and Malta, and of the other coaling stations so essential to the maintenance of the Empire, and would ask for a sum of £2,200,000 to be specially devoted to these purposes. For his (Sir Edward Hamley's) own part, he thought that both the House and the country might well be congratulated on the fact that a Secretary of State for War had at length brought forward a specific proposal for the national defences of the country, and had done it in earnest and in a practical way. They had been but too much accustomed to see it dealt with in a make-believe fashion. They had heard words of promise uttered to the ear but broken to the hope, never intended, perhaps, to be kept, but meant only as a decent shelving of the question. But now the Secretary of State for War told the House not only that these matters were urgent and must receive attention, but had also indicated the financial mode of putting his proposal into execution; and that mode, he was happy to say, was not by the illusory means of the Army Estimates. But he confessed that he wished the right hon. Gentleman could have seen his way to make a larger and bolder demand, for it would appear to be only necessary to convince the House, as he was sure could be done, that certain measures were absolutely indispensable for the safety of the country, and then it would follow, as the night the day, that the means for giving them effect to the full extent would be forthcoming. If the House was convinced and would admit that certain measures were indispensable to the safety of the country, and were at the same time to refuse the means of giving effect to those measures, that would argue a degree of unreason which it would be disrespectful to attribute to that Assembly. Of course, in coming to a conclusion the House would wish to put itself in accord with the feeling of the country. But the same might be said of the country as of the House—that if it were convinced that its own safety depended on certain measures, it would certainly press for their immediate execution. Hitherto the public had been very little acquainted with the matter. It had had no means of informing itself. It was not to be supposed that many persons outside of that House ever saw or examined the Army Estimates; still less was it to be supposed that if they did they would understand them. They knew that we had Naval fortresses, but they were only now learning that as fortresses they had become ineffective. They knew also we had spent a great deal of money on guns, but they were only beginning to understand that those weapons had become useless, because they were obsolete. They saw that in our Volunteers we had a body of very fine and very zealous men, smartly dressed and carrying a rifle; but the public were only just realizing the fact that the National Army was unable to keep the field for a couple of days for want of equipment. They knew that in their time no enemy had ever appeared on our coasts, and they were not prone to believe that any ever would appear. They saw the nations of the Continent groaning beneath their huge armaments, military and naval, but they were not yet accustomed to connect these in their minds with the idea of danger to England; and as they had the natural disinclination of all subjects in all States to give money for public purposes, they had been exactly in the condition of mind to give ear to those trading politicians who, knowing no more of the state of the case than the people themselves did, had been always ready to persuade them that it was a heinous offence to give money for armaments or defences, and who only looked on the relations of the great Military Powers with each other, where the indiscretion of an outpost might precipitate a general war, to draw from thence the happy conclusion that nobody desired, or ever would desire, to interrupt the peace of the world. He thought it was Mr. Cobden, an eminent apostle of peace, who once said—it might have been in that House for all he (Sir Edward Hamley) knew — he could crumple up Russia like a sheet of paper. It was a great pity he did not do it, for it would have saved us an immense amount of expense and panic. But he could not doubt that that declaration, coming from so trusted a source, did a great deal of harm to the nation. Now, he was happy to think that the people were beginning to emerge from that condition of ignorance, and there were many signs abroad that the idea that our defences must be looked to was spreading fast. He wished very much, therefore, that the Secretary of State for War had felt himself able to repose a larger confidence in the willingness both of the House and of the people to render themselves, their property, and their honour safe against the formidable States which might, on some sudden occasion, direct their weapons against us, and which were always prepared to the last detail for war. But he willingly accepted this instalment which the right hon. Gentleman offered. What was proposed would be so much indispensable work done, cleared out of the way, and carried to the credit of the nation. Our naval fortresses would no longer present the ridiculous spectacle of defensive works which were not defensible, armed with obsolete and dismounted artillery. It would be seen from the proposals in the Memorandum that part of the sum was to be appropriated to the completion of what was to be done in this Island, and part to what was to be done outside of it. Now there was so much to be done for our defences both at home and abroad that it was, perhaps, difficult to say what should first demand attention. Where all was so urgent it might, perhaps, be thought that there was no first. But, without meaning to dispute that it was indispensable to the interests of the Empire to place our Mediterranean fortresses in a thorough condition of defence, he was of opinion that if part only of the defences was to be undertaken, that part should lie within the four seas of Britain. It was better to have one piece of work finished than many pieces incomplete, and, consequently, so long as incomplete, absolutely ineffectual; and he should, therefore, have preferred to see the proposed sum appropriated in that direction. It would be doubtless an excellent thing to have our great Dockyards, and the river by which an enemy's ships would approach London, made secure. So far all must agree; nor need there be any dissent from that part of the Report which placed Malta and Gibraltar next in importance among military ports. Those places were certainly rightly placed high in the list of military ports; but he could not but remember that while we were fortifying them, the commercial ports, the avenues on which we depended for so large a portion of our daily bread, would be left, he would not say undefended, but still open to those attacks which naval men thought we would be especially exposed to in the future. Admiral Aube, one of the French Ministers of Marine, speaking on this subject, said—

> "The attack on every source of riches will become not only legitimate, but obligatory. . . . We must expect to see iron-clad fleets turn their power of attack and destruction against all littoral towns, fortified or unfortified, whether purely peace establishments or warlike, to burn them, ruin them, or extort ransoms from them without mercy. With this new duty which we are therefore to conclude is now laid upon our iron-clad fleets, we are now entering upon a new system of maritime warfare—namely, that of the attack and defence of coasts. Every littoral town may be burnt down or laid under contribution by fleets or even by hostile cruisers . . . . . All this is coming . . . even the day when England's shores will be insulted and her ports burnt by the fleet of a victorious enemy."

Such was the declared policy of the French Navy. Now, our own officers seemed to have come to the conclusion that what the commercial ports had chiefly to fear was not an attack by iron-clad fleets. It was considered probable that in no case except that of some great naval disaster should we be left without a Channel Squadron; but it was not easy to guard a large circumference of coast like that of this Island; and the experiments with our Navy last autumn had shown that swift cruisers could always evade a naval squadron, and could enter and occupy ports long enough to inflict immense damage in many ways. The remedy for this was to enable the port to defend itself against the cruisers till the warships, summoned by the telegraph that surrounded the coast, should have time to arrive; and the means of so defending itself were held to be a fleet of gunboats and torpedo boats capable of going outside the port and engaging the enemy, supported by long-ranging guns in batteries on shore. These were the means which, in addition to submarine mine fields in suitable localities, were held by those who had studied the matter to be sufficient for the purpose—that was, for the defence and security of our commercial ports. Such, then, would constitute the security of our coasts against an enemy's ships; and only those who denied that we could ever be at war would dispute that we could not obtain that security too soon; Now, the supply of these floating defences was the business not of the War Office, but the Admiralty. It was, however, necessary to take them into account in the discussion of any general scheme of defence, and he now adverted to them in the hope that provision for them might be among the proposals made to the House by the First Lord of the Admiralty. But there were two other matters included in the scheme which belonged to the province of the War Office—the submarine mines, including the light artillery attached to them, and the guns for the coast batteries of our commercial ports. The submarine mines were, in many situations, likely to be most effective—for instance, where the towns to be defended were situated far up rivers, with a long channel of approach, like London or Newcastle, or in our fortified harbours. But there were other situations where they were less applicable, as where towns were at the mouths of rivers, so that they could be fired on from the sea. The Mersey, for instance, appeared to him to be a case where an increased supply of guns would be more appropriate than an increase of submarine mines. Liverpool was a port which it was essential to keep as open as possible, and ships making for it should find no obstacle. There were already considerable difficulties in the channel, and it was quite possible that submarine mines would be as likely to impede our own ships as the enemy's. He should, therefore, have been glad to see a large part of the sum which was here appropriated to submarine mines and their light artillery given to a supply of the best guns for the coast batteries of our commercial ports, for it must be remembered that the mines could be made quickly, and put down on an emergency, while the guns took a long time to construct. Thus far he had been only speaking of those defences which were to oppose the enterprizes of an enemy's ships; but there remained another equally important kind of defence—namely, that which should oppose invasion, and for that he found little or no provision made in the Memorandum. It was true we had a splendid Army of defenders, increasing in numbers and efficiency every year. But so long as they were kept unprovided for their purpose, so long they could not be counted among the defences of the country. They were quite inefficient, for want of equipment in what would enable them to keep the field. In order to enable them to do that, they wanted personal equipment, stores, and magazines; their transport ought to be organized ready for a crisis; the best rifle and the most powerful gun should be given to them, and the positions they would occupy should be selected and made places of exercise. In fact, a general plan of defence, in all its details, should be most carefully prepared. But for all that he found there was scarcely any provision made in the Memorandum; the chief item of preparation was the announcement that 21 batteries of position were to be given to the Volunteer Artillery. These, he presumed, were to be such guns as were already in store, which, perhaps, were a little behind the present stage of effectiveness. But it was quite a step in the right direction to give these to the Volunteers till better were forthcoming, since these must be, until then, what they would have to use against an enemy. But in scarcely any other respect was a perceptible approach made towards rendering our Auxiliary Forces efficient in equipment. Even the land defence of London received no notice. So long as this extraordinary anomaly existed of a vast and ever-increasing force of defenders who were not permitted to be capable of defending us, so long should he continue to think that to render them efficient was among the most pressing needs of the country. It seemed so illogical for what called itself a practical people to bring them to a certain point and leave them —to stop short of that animating touch which alone was wanting to give them vitality and purpose; and all that was needful would be amply provided for by the addition of £1,000,000 to the sum that was now proposed to be asked for. Now, he knew, and indeed they all knew, that every proposal to spend money in order to render the Kingdom secure was sure to be opposed by a particular class of politicians. But, he would ask, what was their title to be listened to? Did they know anything specially about the defence of coasts? Could they suggest cheaper, better, and equally effective methods? Were they better able than the rest of us to judge of the probabilities of invasion? They did not profess, so far as he knew, to have bestowed any attention on the subject, except to look at the figures which represented the cost. In fact, they might very properly be described as professional cheeseparers. The economy they advocated was not a rational or a respectable economy. It was penuriousness of the kind which refused to replace the missing slate on the roof, or the broken pane in the window. It was the frugality of the miser. But, at the same time, he feared it was allowed to have too much influence on our policy. He felt sure that if this spectre were resolutely grappled with, it would prove a sham—that this ghost in the churchyard would turn out to be a thing with a turnip for a head, lighted by a farthing candle. Now, it might, perhaps, fairly be inferred from passages in the Memorandum that although much that was needed was to be left undone, yet everything was to be undertaken that could be done in the time assigned for the completion of the military ports —that was to say, in three years. But nothing could be clearer than this—that with more money a great deal more could be done; everything that was needed could be done in that time.

In three years—much less, indeed—the Volunteers could be completely equipped, the necessary magazines and stores built, the country reconnoitred and positions defined, the Auxiliary Forces assigned to their posts, the means of transport thoroughly registered, and the land defences of the capital provided for. Matters could be arranged with the commercial ports for joint contributions, and their defence could be proceeded with and rendered complete. All that could go on simultaneously with the works at the military ports. It might be said that we were at present producing guns as fast as the resources of our gun factories would admit. That might be so, though there was a belief, in which he shared, that an important addition would shortly be made to our power of producing guns. But everything else could be set on foot forthwith. If we were to wait three years for the proposed instalment, the present generation would not at that rate see the Kingdom rendered secure. It was impossible to understand why this matter should not be put plainly to the people, and why they should not be directly asked to give the means for effecting it. If that were done, and the means were withheld, it would be impossible to blame anybody but themselves; but now it might truly be said if the matter were not clearly put before them, and if they were not asked to find the money, that there was somebody to blame. He had thought it his duty to put these matters before the House; but, at the same time, he should cordially support the present proposals. Although they formed but a slow and short step, and although they indicated a perilous dallying with a momentous subject, yet the step, so far as it went, was in the right direction, and would have his hearty concurrence. To the Resolution of his hon. and gallant Friend (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) he would also give his hearty concurrence. He had long been of opinion, and had freely expressed it, that this was a time when publicity had come to be a necessary element in our military system. Now that the constituencies, by their numbers, formed so important an element in the Councils of the Nation, it was not only imprudent — it was worse — not to call them into council in everything which required their attention. What higher interest could they have than in rendering the country secure from an enemy? He would not attribute to the people so unreasoning a condition of mind as to suppose that if these matters were put clearly before them they would refuse their ready concurrence in providing the means for giving them effect.

Sir WILLIAM CROSSMAN (Portsmouth) said, he had listened with great interest to the speech of the hon. and gallant Member for Birkenhead (Sir Edward Hamley), but it seemed to him that no greater argument could be used in favour of the Motion before the House than was contained in the Memorandum of the Secretary for War itself. The country, he thought, had a right to demand that the scheme of defence adopted should be an exhaustive one, and they ought to know exactly what sum of money was required to put the whole empire in a state of defence. He could easily understand that in the present critical state of political affairs the Government did not like to place their whole scheme before the country at once, but surely if the Commission asked for were appointed, on that Commission would be thrown the responsibility of stating what was wanted, and only on the Government would be thrown the responsibility of making demands in order to meet the requirements pointed out. He agreed with the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Birkenhead, in the remarks he had made as to the defence of our mercantile ports. We had, he thought, gone rather wild of late in regard to submarine mines—and he spoke with some experience on the question—having been connected with the War Office for some time. The hon. and gallant Member had said that Liverpool and Birkenhead should be kept clear of submarine mines, and he (Sir William Crossman) thought that the entrance not only to those ports should be kept clear but also to the other commercial ports in the country, considering the attacks which could be made on shipping by armoured cruisers. He did not think our ships should have to wait for pilots to clear them through the mine fields. He was sure that guns of position—6-inch guns with disappearing carriages, each supplied with 300 rounds of ammunition, but which would not cost more than £7,500—would be much better suited for the defence of these ports than submarine mines. The money which would be spent in this way would be much better laid out than on submarine mines. No doubt there were some places where submarine mines, protected by quick firing guns, would be useful, but he thought that as a general principle they should not be entirely depended upon. With regard to the defences of the forts, both at home and abroad, which were built after Lord Palmerston's Commission, and most of which he had seen, they were no doubt relatively weakened by the increased power of weapons of offence, and it was desirable to strengthen them. The forts at Portsmouth in particular required strengthening. The forts at Spithead were being strengthened to some extent, but he feared they would never be as strong as they ought to be, having regard to their size and importance. With regard to the coaling stations he thought there was a very serious omission in the Memorandum of the Secretary of State for War. It ought to have been stated what money had been voted by the Colonies for the defence of the coaling stations, because some people in the country appeared to imagine that all the works had been carried out at the expense of the British taxpayer. Large sums had been spent by the Crown Colonies, Hong Kong, Singapore, Ceylon, Mauritius, and Cape Colony. It must be remembered that Hong Kong and Singapore had nearly completed the works. He thought these Colonies had just cause of complaint because, although they had completed, or nearly completed, their forts, no guns had been sent out to them. Natal had voted £10,000 for guns, and the Colony of Victoria had spent £3,500,000 on naval and military matters, and contemplated spending £500,000 more. He had seen most of these places, and could assure the House that they were remarkably well defended; indeed, he believed that Sydney and Melbourne were better defended than some ports at home. But what was wanted was guns, and he was afraid the home Government was neglecting its duty in not making a larger number of guns than they were making. The Memorandum of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War informed them that the Department hoped that all the guns required for the defence of the coaling stations, with the exception of two cases, would be sent out shortly. Did they contemplate sending out 10-inch guns after the accident which happened the other day? If they did not intend to do so, then the guns as promised to the coaling stations could not possibly go out yet. It was said that the works in progress depended on the Imperial Government, but he thought there were few places as to which that could be said with accuracy. St. Lucia and the Mauritius were, he believed, the only places where we were actually paying for our works, and in the case of St. Lucia it was on account of £56,000 having been spent by the Colony on deepening the harbour, so as to make it available for a coaling station. There was another point on which some stress ought to be laid—namely, the garrisons of the coaling stations; for it was the fact that in some cases, whilst we had very small garrisons of only 400 or so, the French in neighbouring Colonies had 7,000 or 8,000. He trusted the Government were taking into consideration the desirability of raising local Volunteer forces for the defence of the coaling stations, and that they had decided also to employ the Royal Marine Artillery on this duty. He also trusted the Government had reflected upon the desirability of giving one person, whether military or naval, supreme command of a fortress. It was of the greatest importance, where a fortress was besieged, that they should know who was in command. The operations, naval and military, were so mixed up together that it was essential that there should be no undefined power, and that there should be one supreme head to direct both the sea and the land operations. For instance, the Navy provides boats for defence of submarine mines, while the guns for the defence of these boats are manned by the Army. He did not care whether it were a soldier or a sailor who was in command, at all events, it should only be one man. He thought he had heard the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War in a remark he had made state that the garrison Artillery was now complete. He only hoped it might be so. It was not many years ago that he was told of a strange circumstance which occurred at one of our principal Naval stations. It happened that while some important experiments were being carried on by the garrison Artillery, a Royal salute was required to be fired, and in order to fire it, the experiments had to be stopped, as there was no one to man the guns. He believed that arrangements were now made by which all the batteries in that important port could be manned. He thought that if the country only knew what was really wanted to complete the defences of the Empire, there would not be that opposition to its being granted on the part of the House which was generally supposed. He wished to compliment the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War on the very able Statement he had put before them, and on the information he had given them in other documents, which he thought they should have had longer time given them to consider, as, he was sorry to say, they had only reached hon. Members on Saturday. He should have been glad if the Memorandum had gone somewhat farther, and he trusted the Government would see their way to appointing a Committee without going to a Division in the matter.

Sir JOHN COMMERELL (Southampton) said, he had heard the hon. and gallant Member for Birkenhead (Sir Edward Hamley) use a remark which seemed the key to the whole position, and it was—"Why do not the Government inform the country of the real state the defences are in?" It appeared that the Government had only one answer to that question—namely, "We are not game." The truth was, the Government considered everything depended upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer presenting what they called a respectable Budget to the country. However, he believed sincerely that if the country were let into the secret, and the people felt that they got 20*s*. for their £1, there would be no necessity for having only a "respectable Budget." He believed that a Royal Commission would do more to assist the Government than anything else. He could not for a moment see why they objected to it. Those who supported the appeal for a Commission desired to strengthen the hands of the Government. They desired to bring such evidence before the country that they would see that the Empire was not in a proper state of defence and the Services not in a proper state of efficiency. If our coaling stations were not in a fit state; if our mercantile ports were not sufficiently protected; if Malta and Gibraltar were not strong enough to resist the attack of a powerful enemy, then all he could say was that the sooner we put all these things to rights the better. It was no use saying, "Oh! we will do it all in three years." No one knew in the present state of affairs what would happen in three years. In three years' time, if these things were not attended to, England might cease to be a nation. If there were certain absolutely necessary arrangements to be carried out, it was better that they should be carried out at once, and that there should be no delay in going to the country and asking for £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 or £5,000,000, whatever amount was considered necessary. He did not believe that the country, when it knew that it was getting value for its money in insurance, would for a moment hesitate to pay. No man cut off half the insurance on his house because the times were bad. If a property was worth insuring at all, surely it was necessary that it should be insured up to its full value. He did not wish to enter into detail, but there were one or two points upon which he should like to dwell for a few moments. The country must remember the geographical position of England—it must remember that it was not enough for the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) to say, "We have 30 iron-clads"—we had not 30 iron-clads—"and the French have only 25." We had first of all to remember that our geographical position divided and split up our forces. On the one hand we had Malta to watch, and command of the Mediterranean to retain, and on the other hand we had the Channel and our mercantile ports to protect. The French would be able to concentrate a force in the Mediterranean which we should find it impossible to withstand. Another thing to be considered was this, we put a great deal too much reliance on torpedoes. Torpedoes were all very well, but it must be remembered that the same science which laid them down on the one side, could take them up or destroy them on the other side. He was perfectly certain that we placed too much reliance on torpedoes. Much as he desired to see the country in possession of a strong Navy, much as he wished to see the number of iron-clads and cruisers increased, he put much greater faith in a proper defence of the coaling stations than anything else. It was much better that we should have our coaling stations properly defended, and should be able to utilize the ships we had to attack an enemy and to defend our own shores than lay out money on new vessels which we could not use in consequence of having improper coal supplies. He believed that in the event of a future war, our great safety would lie in having properly defended and well supplied coaling stations. He observed in the Report of the Committee, of which the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War was Chairman, the remark that Bermuda was our principal military station in North America, and that it was surrounded by reefs which would render it impossible for any vessel to attack it, except under the guns of the forts. Now there never was anything more fallacious or untrue than that statement. There was no question of opinion here. If the Committee had had the proper evidence before it, it would have known that in 1812 an 80 and a 74 gunship and a whole convoy passed through the reef with the greatest possible ease, and did not go within seven miles of the places on which guns were now mounted. These ships went out under sail, but now we had steam power which very materially reduced the difficulties. This statement he made from practical experience. He had been through the reefs himself, and knew every inch of the ground; and he had no doubt there were other observations in the Report of the Committee which other officers could deal with, as he was able to deal with, that with reference to the Island of Bermuda. It was said—"Do not mention these things; you should not breathe them, lest you should let the foreigner into the secret." But were they to suppose that their naval brethren of Germany, France, and Russia were such fools that they did not know these things? If he wanted a correct chart of the Bermuda Channel, where would he go for it? To America. The United States and other countries sent intelligent naval officers about visiting our coaling stations and colonial defences, and these officers made reports week by week and month by month. We might depend upon it that the officers of foreign countries knew more about our weak points and where we should suffer—and, in his view, fatally suffer—in the event of a war than we did ourselves, or, at any rate, than the vast majority of the people of the country did. What was the condition of things at the present moment? If he wanted to go down to Shoeburyness and desired to see experiments carried on there, he would find almost insuperable difficulties in the way, but not so in the case of the foreigner. A foreign officer would find very little difficulty in ascertaining all he desired to know, and that was because it had been laid down that nations must mutually confide to each other what was going on. He remembered during the time of the Russo-Turkish war, in 1878, he happened to be at Chatham one day when a very clever Russian Admiral—a man who, if there was anything to be found out, would find it out precious sharp—came down and said he wanted to see the hydraulic machinery of the *Temeraire*. The Admiral — the late Admiral Fellowes—said to him—"I cannot show it to you." "But," said the Russian, "I have an order from the Admiralty to see it." "I cannot accept that," answered the gallant Admiral, well appreciating the importance of the matter and willing to accept the responsibility of his attitude. "I must be in direct communication with the Admiralty on the subject before I can allow you to see the machinery." Upon that the Russian Admiral flew into a great rage, and said—"I will return to the Admiralty at once." "Do so," said Admiral Fellowes, handing the other a time table; "there is a very good train at 12.20." He (Sir John Commerell) was certain that if they wanted these things dealt with in a generous spirit and desired the country's defences put in the state in which they ought to be, the Royal Commission asked for should be granted. The Commission would obtain the best evidence possible, and the Ministry, let it be on one side or the other, he did not care a snip which, would have their hands strengthened in going to the country and showing it what was wanted. When the country was, in this way, made acquainted with the needs of the Services, he was certain that it would never turn away and grudge the money asked for. If it did, then the responsibility would rest with the country. The House would have done its duty; the Ministers of the day would have done their duty; and if disaster should happen, and we should lose our position in the world through unreadiness, it would be the fault of the people and not of Parliament. This country had always been in a state of unreadiness. If hon. Members would read the past history of the country they would see that England had never been up to the mark when a war broke out—that it had always been months and years after the breaking out of a war that England had come up to the mark. But things were not now as they used to be. We did not now read of a 10 years' war, a 15 years' war, a 20 years' war. Would they in future even hear of a 20 months' war, a 15 months' war, or a 10 months' war? In the future wars would be decided in the promptest manner, and would be won by the Powers that looked things straight in the face in times of peace, and that was prepared the moment a blow was struck either for defensive or offensive operations.

Colonel BLUNDELL (Lancashire, S.W., Ince) said, there are periods in the life of a nation when it is wise to consider its defensive system in a special manner. The French did this after 1870. We had not had such disasters as the French in the war with Germany; but an enormous change had taken place in the last 50 years in the wealth, population, and means of this nation, and also in its vulnerability. The insulation of these Islands, speaking in a military and defensive sense, was not nearly so great as it was before the days of steam. It used to be said that steam had bridged the Channel; in his remarkable letter written to Sir John Burgoyne, our greatest Commander of the last generation had emphatically shown to what an extent we had become more vulnerable. What had happened since then? The Western Nations had been compelled, for their own security, to arrange a system by which they could organize and equip their forces, the whole manhood of the country, and to mobilize it within a few days; while railway systems had been developed, and it would be possible very rapidly to concentrate forces on many points of the coast of the Continent where there are harbours convenient for embarkation, and to which the telegraph could summon vessels from distant ports. If a nation, by accident, obtained temporary command of the Channel, all those reasons would help them to throw a force into this country. Now, what chances were there of a nation getting temporary command of the Channel? In the Navy invention succeeded invention. Ships of war were now most complicated machines, and no man could say what would happen to them till they were tested. Formerly, naval wars were tactical; in the future they would be strategical also; and even if we had always the power to command the Channel, the demands on our Fleet to protect our ocean commerce would be so great that we should probably have to send it away from the Channel. Now, if an enemy, or enemies, got the temporary command of the Channel, what had we to oppose to them? The great majority of people seemed to look to forts and works as the mainstay of defence. But that was not so. The Duke of Wellington said, in the celebrated letter previously quoted—

> "Let any man examine our maps and road books, and consider the matter, and judge for himself. I know of no mode of resistance, much less of protection, from this danger, excepting by an Army in the field capable of meeting and contending with its formidable enemy, aided by all the means of fortification which experience in war can suggest."

The backbone of defence was an Army in the field; and he maintained that defensive security was the basis and foundation of our power of offence. It was absolutely necessary that we should organize and equip our forces, and enable them to be used as an Army for the defence of London, or anywhere else; and that London should no longer remain capable of being "rushed." We should take strategic points round London, and there form our ranges for the Volunteers; and upon those points, the main avenues of approach, we should place guns in position, and there drills should be regularly carried on by the Artillery Volunteers. If the large force we had in this country were organized as it ought to be, and if we also had those points around London made the nuclei of a system of field fortifications that could be rapidly improvised, should the occasion arise, the temptation to invade the country would be gone. What was the latent power of this country? The latent power of the country could only be rendered active by keeping the country secure from invasion. They could measure the latent power of this country very well by comparing that of the North Americans during the Civil War, a nation which had no conscription. In a war of four years, they put 2,040,000 men in the field, out of a population of 20,000,000; while in the British Isles we had a population of 37,000,000. Therefore, our power for defence or offence was, no doubt, enormous, upon the condition that we maintained the security of these Islands. As had been truly said, a prudent householder did not refuse to insure because he was short of money; he knew that it was no economy not to insure. The money that we spent upon defences, if it was not sufficient, was wasted money. He believed if we had a Royal Commission, presided over by a man like Lord Dufferin, in whom the country and both political Parties had confidence, we should get something elaborated which would give us a feeling of much greater security. He did not believe that was a thing which would lead to any great expenditure; but he did believe we should get a system on which we could really rely. He should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) to give some information with regard to furnishing the Army with magazine rifles. Just as the introduction of the breech-loader in 1866 gave a decisive advantage to the Prussian Army against the Austrians, so he thought it highly probable that at the present time the possession of a magazine rifle would give a similar decisive advantage to the Power using it. If that weapon was the right weapon, after it had been thoroughly tested, not a moment should be delayed; but the whole Army must be armed with it, as well as the Militia and the Volunteers. It must be recollected that, whether they wished it or not, this country was, in consequence of its foreign possessions, also in a sense an offensive Power, and must be ready to attack. He trusted the Government would allow a Royal Commission to inquire into the matter, because he believed that this work would strengthen the hands of the Government.

SIR FREDERICK FITZWYGRAM (Hants, Fareham) said, he should gladly support the Motion of the hon. and gallant Baronet the Member for North-West Sussex (Sir Walter Barttelot). To his mind, an inquiry would not only be useful, but in the present condition of the country, it was absolutely essential. He did not take the pessimistic view of our military affairs which many people did. He did not think that everything of a military character in this country was wrong and badly done and that everything that was foreign was good. He did not believe that the armaments and organization of foreign nations were perfect; but he thought there was very considerable doubt as to whether our state of security was such as it behoved a great country to rest content with; and if there was any doubt on the point he thought that Her Majesty's Government would do well to grant the Commission of Inquiry, which he believed to be necessary for the investigation of the question. If he had any doubts about this point, he thought the evidence they had heard read this evening of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) when Secretary of State for War, would completely establish the case and be the best argument for the granting of the Commission. He (Sir Frederick Fitzwygram) did not support the Motion in any sense in opposition to the Government of the day—not the smallest degree in the world. But for many years past successive Secretaries of State for War had dangled before the eyes of the country delusive statements as to the improvement they had made in the state of our organizations in our arms and defences, only, as a general rule, to be snuffed out when a new Secretary came into Office. He lived in the neighbourhood of Portsmouth, and saw a good deal of the Spithead Forts, which had been spoken of in course of the debate, and he could say, from his own observations, that these forts were perfectly insufficient for the defence of the Dockyard and the Solent against the long-range guns of the present day. He saw that a certain sum of money had been taken for the strengthening of these forts; but he thought that, however they were strengthened, they would prove insufficient because they were too near the places they had to defend. Cruisers could lie a mile or more outside the most advanced fort and pitch shells into the Dockyard and Arsenal, destroying the whole of the shipping and stores there. Well, if this were the case with regard to our great Port and Arsenal at Portsmouth, which were under the immediate view of the Commander-in-Chief and the First Lord of the Admiralty, he could easily conceive that many of our defences, which were further off, were in a position which was not creditable to this country and would not give safety to our shores. At Portsmouth and in the Solent there were an immense number of guns on the fortifications, many more than could be manned by the Royal Artillery. They had, however, at Portsmouth and Southampton very good corps of Volunteer Artillery. Last year he had had a discussion with the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War, and had pressed on him the complaints made by the commanding officers of these corps, that they had had no training in the use of the new large guns. Well, a gun had lately been given—one, he believed, to each of these corps. So far, to a certain degree, good work was being done, but the officers still complained that the supply of ammunition was so short that though the men had learnt the use of the gun they could not become efficient gunners for want of practice. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War would take this into consideration. If our great Arsenals were to be of any use at all, great dependence must be placed on the Volunteers. Volunteers might to a certain degree fail in the field; but he believed that the Artillery Volunteers, who lived in the towns they were called upon to protect, who had no marching about to face and no encampments and so forth, would prove to be a very efficient force if only they were fairly treated by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War. Regarding this question generally, he thought they might divide the nation into three parts. There was one party who denied the danger, and, because they denied the danger, therefore they grudged the cost—that was a small and fanatical party; then there was the party who knew the danger and feared the cost, and he hoped Her Majesty's Government were not to be found in that second party; then there was another party, of good men and true, who knew the danger and were prepared to pay the cost, who preferred the safety of the country to the money bags of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Colonel EYRE (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough) said, he should support the Amendment of the hon. and gallant Baronet (Sir Walter B. Barttelot), not from any feeling of antagonism to the Government, but because he believed that if this Royal Commission were granted it would be calculated to strengthen the hands of the Government instead of weakening it. Let them remember in what condition Europe was at present. It would not do for this country to be behindhand when every nation was an armed camp—all whose inhabitants were practically soldiers, where even every train, as in Germany, was marked with the number of men, horses, and goods to be carried in time of war. In such circumstances it was necessary, although we might not profess to be a military nation, that if we had interests and shores and coasts worth defending, we should be ready in case of war. It was important, first of all, to know what Army we wanted, and, secondly, what they had to do. For that purpose a Commission was required which would report favourably or unfavourably on the state of the defence of the country. The inquiry suggested would discover what was the weakest link in their armour of national defence. He did not understand why the Government objected to the Committee. He would call attention to the unnecessary expense connected with brigade depôts, and he condemned the equipment of our soldiers, beside the general want of system. He also thought we should have a cordon of Volunteer Artillery round our coasts. For a long period of the year the staff at these depôts was far in excess of the men quartered there or the work to be done. Economy might very well be practised in this direction. He hoped that the Government would consent to grant the Royal Commission, and he felt convinced that any Government which had the recommendations of this

Commission at their back in the measures they undertook for the defence of the country would be infinitely stronger than they could otherwise be.

Sir LEWIS PELLY (Hackney, N.) said, he ventured to think that this discussion had travelled a little beyond the limits of the Motion before the House. The Motion itself seemed to him simple and precise, its effect being that a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into and report upon the requirements for the protection of the Empire. Its scope was to inquire and to report. Perhaps some of the speeches which had been made on it had dealt more with the details of the condition of our present defences. No one doubted that our iron-clads would give a good account of an enemy in line of battle, would guard carefully our coasts in some parts, and watch also the naval ports of the enemy; but what was felt was that the Channel in its whole length might not be quite secure, that the supplies on which we depended in our Island Kingdom might be cut off, and our coast line insulted. In other quarters it is felt that our Cape or our alternative Line to the East is not so safe as may be supposed, since the French hold all the Naval positions between the East coast of Africa and the Mauritius—namely, the Islands of the Comorro group, with the ample and secure anchorage of Mayotte, the Isles and Ports on the West and on the East coast of Madagascar and Bourbon. In other quarters it was assumed that our Indian Possessions were not sufficiently protected. But, however that might be, the question was whether there should or should not be a Commission of Inquiry into all these affairs, and to submit recommendations as to what ought really to be done to place this Kingdom and this Empire in a position to meet contingencies. He could understand very well that there would be a feeling in the country that men connected with the Warlike Services attached too much importance to these matters; but, for himself, he could truly say that he abhorred the very idea of war. He might say more than that, for he thought influences and causes even now were at work which would tend, in the long run, to induce, by the concurrence and co-operation of the civilized nations of the West, to a lasting and general peace; but the danger lay in the transitional period. The lasting peace might come; but this Empire might not survive to enjoy it. What was wanted was to ascertain what were the real facts of the case, and if we found ourselves not in a position to face the transitional period successfully, then to put ourselves into such position. He did not know that the Motion was founded on anything more than that. If it was granted, he thought the Treasury Bench would receive strength and support from it, for they would find that they had at their back not only the naval and military classes in the House, but also the commercial and professional Members. They would, undoubtedly, have the country behind them. In his opinion, the country would not grudge a large sum if it felt that by the expenditure it could put its warlike forces in such a state as to prevent anxiety and panic. Whatever the additional cost of money might be to place this country in a safe position, they must remember that no expenditure was so great, no outlay was so extravagant, as that which followed on a panic. It would be more economical to spend even a large sum in carrying out a settled plan; and he trusted, therefore, that Her Majesty's Government would see their way to allowing a Royal Commission to be appointed.

Colonel SANDYS (Lancashire, S.W., Bootle) said, he desired to make a few remarks on the Memorandum of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War, which he considered a most important document, marking a great step in advance of everything that had been done before. It was a most able and exhaustive document, and he must congratulate the right hon. Gentleman upon having issued it. The provision in regard to the organization of a small force was an admirable one; but he should like to see provision made for calling out a large force. Up to the present we had been able to organize for our small wars; but the scheme we had to consider at the present time was what we should do if we had to provide a force for a war in the East. The step which had been taken, however, was a step in the right direction; but it did not go far enough. The statement that the accoutrements, equipments, &c., of the First Army Corps was practically complete was a matter for great satisfaction; but although the scheme might be complete on paper, he should like to see the men paraded in line of battle, for the purpose of testing their efficiency and numbers. He observed that arrangements had been made for the formation of 20 batteries of Artillery Volunteers. It was very advisable that our Volunteers should devote their attention to gunnery and coast defence rather than attempt to organize a force of Field Artillery, the duties of which they were not fitted to discharge. He did not know whether it was the intention that the guns in position should be entirely for coast and battery defence, or whether they should include field guns.

MR. E. STANHOPE: It is not the intention to include field guns at present.

COLONEL SANDYS said, he had always considered Field Artillery beyond the Volunteer Force, and he therefore trusted that their attention would be centred on guns for coast defences. With regard to the branch of the Service with which he was intimately connected —the Militia—it had always appeared to him (Colonel Sandys) that the Militia Force was not made enough of. The Militia Force was the great Constitutional force of the country. It was the force on which we must rely as the second line of our Army. It was the Army's true support. There had of late arisen a habit on the part of successive Secretaries of State to pass over the Militia, and to turn attention chiefly in the direction of the development of the Volunteers. The Militia ought, however, to be made as efficient as possible; and in the scheme he would no doubt bring forward, he hoped the Secretary for War would not lose sight of that branch of the Service. The large proportion of desertions from the Militia was a matter deserving of serious attention, and we ought to endeavour to get together Militia forces in which we could rely upon every man turning up on parade. Deducting the Army Reserve men and the 10,000 men who deserted last year, the Militia had only 60,000 available men left who could be put on parade. A considerable item in that 60,000 men consisted of Irish Militia. Could we, considering what had been going on in the Sister Isle, look upon these men as a reliable force? If not, that would make a considerable reduction in the figures. Then there was a medical examination for them to go through, and it was not certain they would all pass the doctor. The original figure of the Militia was 108,000, and it was generally supposed that that number was available. But many of those men enlisted in two and even three regiments, which they were enabled to do, as the training took place at different periods. He should like to see one day appointed for the calling out of the whole of the Militia, and in that way they would be able to ascertain exactly the number of men who were available; and much valuable information might be obtained in many respects. Then, again, the Militia was under-officered; nearly all the younger officers were men who were going into the Line regiments, and who, on a declaration of war, would be posted at once to Line regiments, leaving the Militia with very few officers below the rank of captain. That was a serious matter, to which attention should be given. Another mistake in our territorial system with regard to the Militia was that too many battalions were formed, the result being that it was impossible to get sufficient officers. The true constitution of a regiment, in his opinion, was one battalion, a depôt of two companies as a nucleus for recruits, officers and men, and a Militia regiment attached to the depôt. That arrangement would involve the doing away with the linked battalion system. With regard to the Militia Reserve, last year there were 578 men passing from that Reserve. The total strength of the Army Reserve was 51,000; but again, he said, that was merely 51,000 on paper. He knew that on one occasion when they were called they all came out; but, as no doubt the House knew, a number of those men were at the present moment serving with Her Majesty's regiments elsewhere, and of course could not leave their posts. On this question, also, he should like to see a day appointed for calling out the whole of the men, so that we could ascertain how many men could be relied upon. No doubt, the Militia was the true Army support, and supplied 11,000 men to the Army last year, a fact of which Militia officers ought to be very proud. But it had been stated that on the declaration of war a force of 25,000 men would be drafted from the Militia into the active Army. He believed that would be the case; but what would be the position of the Militia Force if that quantity of men were taken from it? They would practically skim the cream from the Militia, for the Army men serving in the Militia were the very best men. Therefore, he thought it would be worth the while of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War, in considering defensive schemes for this country, to see whether he could not devise some means for filling up the vacancies which the present system would cause. He would make a suggestion which might possibly meet the difficulty. Supposing the ranks of the Militia were depleted to the extent of 25,000, he should like to see a scheme promoted by which the Volunteer Forces should supply that quantity of men to step into the ranks of the Militia. Each corps could keep 100 men in its ranks ready to do that, who should be called extra-efficients, and who should receive some recognition from the State in that respect. He should like to ask if the Army Reserve was fixed at 50,000, and if so, why? He believed that an Army Reserve of 100,000 would be a cheap force, and that a grant could not be devoted to a better purpose. It might be said—"It is very easy to formulate a respectable military scheme, but where is the money to come from?" He maintained that this was the very reason why a Royal Commission should be appointed, because what the country wanted to know was how a symmetrical scheme was to be formed, the number of men, and the amount of money requisite. For many years past the military interests of this country had been set forth in the House and in the country by experienced military officers; but their views had always been set aside by the Secretary of State in power, who had given a formal, half-hearted adherence to the scheme, and had cramped it down because he had said that he had only a certain amount of money to spend, and that it would make his Party unpopular if he asked for any more. There never yet had been a Government in this country which had had the courage to stand before the country and, stating what were the real needs, ask for so much money, and stake their official and political existence upon getting it. Such an opportunity now presented itself to the Government—a Government which he was proud to support because he believed they had the honour and the well-being of this country at heart. It was because he believed in them that he called upon the Government on behalf of his constituents and many in the country who would suffer bitterly in their need if a scheme of military efficiency was not properly carried forward now, to grant the Inquiry which was asked for, so that when the strain came they might have prepared a scheme at leisure, and should not be called upon to prepare in a hurry, spending great sums of money, and spending them badly. He should like to know what the £5 bounty and free kit system of enlistment during the Crimean War cost? Supposing London be occupied for two days, he asked what sum of money would be levied in order to buy out the foreign occupiers? Would it not, therefore, be better now to add a few millions to the Estimates yearly in order that the Forces might become efficient? If the Government assented to the Motion, the country would, when the hour of danger came, thank them for their timely action, and the heart of England would not begrudge the money.

COLONEL BRIDGEMAN (Bolton) said, he could assure the Government that the supporters of the Motion did not wish that it should in any way be looked upon as a censure upon or as a Vote of Want of Confidence in the Government. They wished, as a matter of fact, to raise the matter above one of Party, and they saw no other way of doing that except through the means of a Royal Commission. The country knew there were in the House many members of the Military and Naval Professions, and they imagined that those Members would see that the safety of the country was maintained. Those Members were now making an effort to attain that object. The time might come—and come sooner than some expected—when we might be in the same great stress Paris was in in 1870; and then the country would naturally say that those she had looked upon to protect her had really betrayed her. The opinion of Lord Wolseley upon this matter was of the greatest importance, and it really put the contention of the supporters of the Motion in a nutshell. The evidence given by the noble Lord before the Committee, to which reference had been made to-night, showed clearly the necessity for a Royal Commission. In Answer 2,641, Lord Wolseley said—

> "The greatest misfortune that occurs to me upon this subject, arises from the fact that our military requirements have never been inquired into—have never been tabulated and laid down. There is no fixed point up to which we work, whether it is the Commander-in-Chief or any official connected with the Army. We have had nothing decided by the country as to what the country wants, or as to what our military policy, its aims and requirements are."

That was the point of hon. Members who supported the proposal now under consideration. They thought that there ought to be an inquiry as to what the aims and requirements of the country were. They thought that the inquiry should not be conducted by the Secretary of State for War, but by an independent tribunal which would look at the subject altogether apart from Party considerations. Lord Wolseley was then asked—

> "Then you do not know what you want?"

and his reply was—

> "We do not know what we want. We do not know what we are working up to. We have a certain number of horses and regiments, and those numbers vary according to the particular exigencies of the political Party in power. There has never been any authoritative inquiry instituted as to what are the military requirements of the Empire; how many troops we require to have in England, how many we require in our Colonies, how many in India, and in our garrisons abroad."

The next question was—

> "Do you think it would be an impossible thing, or even a difficult thing, if serious inquiry were made into the subject, to draw out some permanent system of the nature of that which you describe?"

and Lord Wolseley, in reply, said—

> "I think it would be a very simple process, a process that might be very easily accomplished by a Royal Commission of both Houses of Parliament, not constituted of Military men but of judicial men who would look at it as a judicial inquiry, and examine experts on the various topics connected with the subject."

Perhaps, the Government would say a Commission was appointed in 1886. But the answer would be that that Commission was appointed for totally different purposes. A Commission was wanted now to ascertain what were the requirements of the Army; and the Commission appointed in 1886 especially recommended that a Commission for that purpose should be appointed. Therefore, if the Commission in 1886 carried any weight at all, its recommendation in this respect ought to be respected. He had heard it said that an inquiry would merely display our weaknesses. But it must be known to everybody that the points where we were weak, and the points where we were strong, were very well known to every one of the Intelligence Departments on the Continent. In all probability, the Intelligence Departments on the Continent know very nearly as much as our own Intelligence Department knew. He believed that the only people who would obtain knowledge as a result of the Commission would be our own people. He and his hon. Friends contended that it was of the utmost importance that our own people should know the real facts of the case. He was sure the country generally would not be afraid of spending money if they could be quite certain on two points—namely, that the expenditure was absolutely necessary, and that they got the worth of their expenditure. He had the greatest possible pleasure in supporting the Motion of his hon. and gallant Friend (Sir Walter B. Barttelot).

Colonel HUGHES (Woolwich) said, he was grateful for the consideration which the Volunteer Service had received at the hands of the Authorities within the last year; but there was one point upon which he desired to offer a suggestion. The equipment and training of the Volunteers was not yet on a satisfactory footing, because the Force had not the capital with which to meet the first outlay. Now, that the defence of the country was to be so much in the hands of the Volunteers, it was most important that the equipment of the Force and the permanent arrangements affecting it should be as perfect as possible. He found that in 1872 an Act of Parliament was passed to enable some millions sterling to be raised for the purpose of providing for the building of barracks, and also for the acquiring, under the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, of freehold ground for Militia depôt centres and storehouses. Although it might be inconvenient to add to the expenditure of the current year, still if the Volunteer Service was considered a permanent Service—and he hoped it now was—it might be advisable to consider whether headquarters and coats, valise equipment and stores of all kinds might not be provided in the same way as Militia training grounds were provided. The Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt were, under the Act of 1872, allowed to invest their money in Terminable Annuities, running over a period of 30 years, and to take for that purpose money deposited in the Savings Banks and in the Post Office Bank. At the present moment, when the Volunteers required head-quarters, they either had to hire them at a large rent, or to expend a large sum of money on leasehold property, which of course ultimately reverted to the freeholder. If the Service was a permanent institution, he trusted the Government would do something similar to that which they did for the Militia—namely, provide for it freehold head-quarters. Only the other week he had occasion to negotiate a loan of £7,000 for the purposes of a cemetery, and he obtained the money from the Metropolitan Board of Works at 3½ per cent, the same rate of interest charged to the London School Board. He could have the money from the Works Commissioners at 4 per cent. At the present moment, if Volunteers provided head-quarters for themselves, they had to borrow money from private individuals, and probably pay 5 per cent. They received no assistance from any public Common Fund, such as he had indicated. It would be of immense advantage if some arrangement could be made by which Volunteers could have head-quarters provided, in the first instance, from some common fund, at a moderate rate of interest—say, at 3½ per cent. The Government would make money by the advances, that is the difference between Post Office Bank interest and 3½ per cent, and the Volunteers would save the difference between 3½ and 5 per cent, which they now had to pay. The same thing might happen with regard to equipment. In many instances, the first cost, which often amounted to £400, was defrayed by the officer in command, and he had to wait for years before he could get the whole of his money back; while, if the Government lent it, they could deduct the repayments out of the Capitation Grant, and would have the Freehold as security. This matter was urgent, and therefore let some money be raised, not on the Revenue of the year, but by means of Terminable Annuities, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer could devise; let the needs of the Volunteers, both as regarded equipment and head-quarters, be provided for, and the Force thus put in a permanent condition.

SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE (Exeter) said that, having been recently connected with the War Office, he hoped the House would indulge him for a few minutes while he explained why he was unable to support the Motion of his hon. and gallant Friend, though he sympathized with its object. He was glad to hear from his hon. and gallant Friend, and others who had spoken, an expression of their cordial appreciation of the services which his right hon. Friend had rendered to the country during his tenure of office. Having had the honour of serving under him for the last twelve months, he must say it would be hard to find a man who had the welfare of the country more at heart, and the Memorandum he had submitted showed the earnest desire by which his right hon. Friend was actuated to promote the interests of the Army. There was very little which his hon. and gallant Friend had said with which he did not agree, and especially with respect to the deplorable system of allowing our stores to run down, buying in a hurry, whether it was £11,000,000 that was expended or a less sum, inspecting in a hurry, and paying the highest prices for inferior goods, which ought not to be served out to the British Army. A more pernicious system he could not conceive. Another point on which he agreed with his hon. and gallant Friend was that some system of greater publicity was possible than any which at present prevailed with regard to our reserves of stores. There were certain classes of our warlike stores about which the world ought not to be informed; but he was afraid that foreigners were very often too well acquainted with the state of our military stores. But there were many classes of stores as to which no advantage could be gained by a foreign country knowing the quantity we had, while it would be well that our own people should know whether we were deficient in them or not. Then came the question whether a Royal Commission was the best machinery for obtaining such knowledge. His hon. and gallant Friend spoke of the Vote for improving the defence of our ports, arsenals, and coaling stations. Now, he would be prepared to support his right hon. Friend if he were to propose a larger sum; but what was now proposed was a substantial step in advance. He was grateful to his right hon. Friend for proposing it, and he was convinced it would be accepted by a large majority of the House and endorsed by the voice of the country. As for the adoption of a Royal Commission, he would like to ask what the functions of that Commission were to be. They might be twofold. There might be a Commission to dictate to the Secretary of State and the Government for the time being what their military policy was to be in the future, or there might simply be a Commission to report to the Secretary of State and make known to the country what the exact state of our stores and supplies was. There was a wide difference between the two. He would be very unwilling to support a proposal for appointing a Commission which would take out of the hands of the Government the responsibility for our foreign policy. It must be remembered that a Commission of that kind would not be strengthening the hands of the Secretary of State. On the other hand, if the Commission was merely to report as to the state of our supplies, he thought sufficient *data* for that purpose existed already in the Reports of Lord Morley's, Sir Fitz James Stephen's, the Fortifications Committees, and other sources of information. If the proposed Commission were made a judicial rather than a military one, its findings would not long command the respect of military and naval men; and if, on the other hand, it consisted of military and naval men, it would embody the views merely of a body of officers whose views were already known to the Executive or could easily be ascertained by the Executive. Another practical objection was that a Royal Commission would be failing in its duty if it did not recommend various changes and an increase in the stores, which would lead to increased expenditure. The practical effect would be that inventors and inventions would be discouraged, because the officials of the Department would shelter themselves under the ægis of the standard which the Commission would lay down, and greater difficulty would be experienced in getting new inventions adopted into the Service. Suppose, for example, the Commission recommended the introduction of a certain number of new transport waggons, and suppose a new waggon were to be discovered, if there were a large supply of the existing waggons in store there would be a great disposition on the part of the permanent officials to economize money by saying, "We had better not go behind the findings of the Royal Commission." He hoped his right hon. Friend would deprecate any plan which would tend to withdraw proper Parliamentary control from the money voted each year. No doubt recent changes would increase the responsibility of the military branch of the War Office, but it was absolutely impossible that the military advisers would ever be got to accept full responsibility for the Army Estimates unless they were given the full control over the money voted, and it was not possible to conceive a state of circumstances, in these democratic times, in which it would be possible, even if it were desirable, to withdraw such strict Parliamentary control over the Estimates of the House. He thought, without going the length of appointing a Royal Commission, there were many practical changes advantageous to the public and to the Army which might be made by the Secretary of State. His right hon. Friend had given to the country a full and ample earnest of his desire and intention to make those changes, and the House ought to treat with great confidence a Minister who had shown remarkable readiness to meet the views of the Army as far as he could, and, therefore, he hoped his hon. and gallant Friend would not press his Motion to a Division. If he did so, he should, though with much reluctance, be bound to vote against him.

Colonel HILL (Bristol, S.) said, he rose to support the Motion of the hon. and gallant Baronet (Sir Walter B. Barttelot). He conceived there was no subject of deeper interest to the people of this country at large than that of our public defences. He believed the great majority of taxpayers were desirous and determined that our defences should be adequate for the protection of our coasts, our shipping, and our Colonies; but an opinion had got abroad that we did not get the protection we ought to receive for our money, and there was a feeling of apprehension that the non-combatant branches of the Service were not yet so perfectly organized, that we could be quite sure that the mistakes arising therefrom in former times were not likely to appear again. He believed a Royal Commission would sift all those matters; it would ascertain what the defences were and how much money was necessary to be provided, and he believed the people would be contented to pay the cost of the work. He should not have intruded on the House were it not that he was anxious to draw attention to what he conceived to be an important matter in connection with the defence of our coaling stations. He was glad to see in the Memorandum of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) that the matter was receiving attention, and that a sum was proposed to be voted for carrying out this important work. Without that it was impossible that the Navy could do its work and that our mercantile marine could receive the protection which it required; but, at the same time, if they merely defended the coaling stations and left the places where the coal was obtained unprotected, the work was only half done. It was well known to every Member of that House that the coal which is used in the Navy came from only one place, namely, South Wales. The coal of South Wales was much more adapted for steam purposes than all other coals, and it had the advantage of being smokeless. This coal was produced at Cardiff, Newport, and Swansea. Newport had practically no defences, Swansea had merely a small battery, while Cardiff had no defences at all. It was true that there were a chain of forts for the Bristol Channel defence, but those forts had no guns capable of coping with the arms of the present day, and they would be, therefore, absolutely usleess for the purpose of defence. There had been a suggestion that submarine mining would be an adequate means of defence, but in the Bristol Channel, where the tide ran very swiftly, he very much doubted whether that system could be effectually applied. Those rapid tides would be a great factor in favour of an attacking force, because a vessel coming up Channel with a five-knot tide and making 20 knots an hour would be an extremely difficult object to strike. Until efficient fortifications were built, he urged that a few guns of the heaviest calibre should be placed in commanding positions at those ports where they would be ready in time of need, and likewise afford the Volunteer Artillery an opportunity of learning the drill of the guns they would have to use in case their service should be required on an emergency. He ventured to think that it was the expense which stood in the way of those works. When they came to consider the enormous national interest and the enormous private pecuniary interest involved in the preservation of those ports, he did not think that the question of money ought to be taken into consideration. He had been very much struck with the fact that at Tangiers there were no less than four 100-ton guns, and if that poor port could be supplied with those guns, he did not think that this country ought to grudge the money necessary to secure so important an object as the protection of the ports to which he was referring. He looked with satisfaction and gratitude at the remarks which the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War was pleased to make with reference to the Volunteers. He could assure the House that the Volunteers were most desirous of doing everything in their power to render themselves efficient. Something had been said with regard to field batteries. He did not mean to say that the Volunteers could possibly acquire that precision in field drill which was gained by the Royal Artillery, but it seemed to him, if there were sufficient Artillery Volunteers for the purpose and the Government were prepared to grant the necessary money, there was no doubt that field batteries could be formed. At the present time he believed there was not a sufficiency of garrison gunners, and therefore the time was not yet come when they might agitate for field batteries; nevertheless he hoped that more facilities would be given to Artillery Volunteers for learning the drill of heavy guns. He was pleased to find that a sum of money was proposed to be voted for camp exercise with the Regular Forces, and he was assured that this was going in a direction in which the greatest possible service could be done to the Volunteers. He should have been much pleased if, during the Recess, the Secretary of State for

War could have found himself in a position to add to the Estimates the small sum necessary for the old Adjutants of the Auxiliary Forces—that he had not been able to accede to the prayer of the Memorandum which was presented to him signed by over 100 Members of the House of Commons that their case should be considered. He would not attempt to go into the question now, but would only say generally that, although he had no reason to believe that anything he might say would induce the Secretary of State for War to alter the opinion he had formed, yet he thought it was hardly desirable in the interest of the Service that officers or public servants should have reason to feel that they were suffering under what they considered to be a grievance—namely, that the conditions of their Service had been altered to their injury without proper compensation. Finally he thought that grave reasons had been adduced for the granting of a Royal Commission. He believed that Commission would be a benefit to all the Services, and that their recommendations would be exceedingly valuable and would cause the taxpayers to provide the necessary money, for what had been properly called our assurance, with much greater satisfaction than they did at present.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. Brodrick) (Surrey, Guildford) said, the Government had no reason to complain of the speech of the hon. and gallant Member for North-West Sussex (Sir Walter B. Barttelot), who introduced this subject, or of the speeches that followed. The hon. and gallant Member for North-West Sussex, in the course he had taken, was doubtless anxious to strengthen the hands of the Secretary of State for War; but it was to be noticed that the scope of the hon. and gallant Member's Motion had been considerably widened by every successive speaker. It was a remarkable fact that, though the hon. Members who had spoken all supported the Motion for a Commission, not one of them insinuated that the present policy of Her Majesty's Government was proceeding in a wrong direction. Motions for a Commission were generally based on an allegation that the Government were pursuing a wrong policy; but no such allegation was made in the present case. If hon. and gallant Gentlemen had pointed out that the Government was blind to the military needs of the Empire, then he could have understood their asking for a Commission; but, instead of that, they all seemed to admit that the Secretary of State was proceeding step by step in the direction that they themselves indicated. Under these circumstances, it certainly did seem anomalous that the Government should be asked to accept a Commission which would be fruitful of the most unfortunate consequences on the publication of its Report, and which, in addition, would widen questions and transfer responsibility. The hon. Baronet the Member for Exeter (Sir Stafford Northcote) alone of those who had spoken foresaw the disadvantages which would follow the granting of a Commission. The speeches of all the hon. and gallant Gentlemen practically amounted to proposals for a gigantic development of the military forces of the Crown. There was scarcely one hon. and gallant Gentleman whose speech, if pushed to its legitimate conclusion, would not involve an enormous increase in our Army Corps. The hon. and gallant Member for Bolton (Colonel Bridgeman) had spoken of wôrking up to a fixed point; but he did not inform the House whether he considered two Army Corps to be the proper fixed point. Nor had any other hon. and gallant Gentleman expressed any opinion on this matter. But before appointing a Commission some diversity of opinion should exist to justify it. No one had said that two Army Corps were insufficient. The hon. and gallant Member for South-East Durham (Sir Henry Havelock-Allen) said that these Army Corps should be kept fully prepared. But there was no necessity for a Commission to enforce so obvious a fact as that. The hon. and gallant Member for Birkenhead (Sir Edward Hamley) animadverted on the organization of the Volunteers, and proposed that magazines and stores for the whole of our 220,000 Volunteers should be erected, and that about £1,000,000 should be spent in providing them with field guns. The hon. and gallant Member for South-East Durham said that if the Volunteers were called out they could not keep the field for a week. Well, upon that point he would find many military authorities to differ from him.

Sir HENRY HAVELOCK-ALLAN said, he had stated that the Volunteers could not be kept together for a fortnight without unhinging the whole social system of the country.

Mr. BRODRICK said, he thought the hon. and gallant Gentleman was mistaken in that view. Some counties had already taken up the question of transport for Volunteers as a local matter, and it would be an excellent manifestation of public spirit if other counties acted likewise. A great deal had been said with regard to the defence of military ports; but no one had condemned the intention of the Secretary of State for War to proceed first of all with works at Portsmouth, Plymouth, and on the Thames. The only point made was that they wished to see larger sums expended. But to that the Secretary of State's reply was that the sum proposed to be spent was as much as could be advantageously expended in a certain time. As to mercantile ports—such as Bristol—if, after being provided with submarine mines and quick-firing guns, according to the Government scheme, they were not satisfied, they could make an additional effort on their own behalf, for the Government recognized the principle that localities, for the sake of their own trade, should do something for themselves in providing the necessary defence. He could not pass from this subject without aknowledging in the fullest degree the exertions made by our Colonies with regard to coaling stations. Nothing did more to knit together the different parts of this Empire than the exertions of the Colonies—hand-in-hand with the Mother Country—to put their coaling stations in a proper state of defence. He had listened with great attention to the speeches that had been delivered, but had not been able to find one single word of genuine criticism upon the course pursued by the Government. If the Government had come down and said that they had effected great economy at the cost of efficiency, the House would have had some ground to find fault with them. Under all the circumstances he put this question to the House. Ought they not, before considering what they should do, to give some credit to, and repose some confidence in, the Government for what had been done already? The hon. and gallant Member for North-West Sussex went back to the Crimean War and the Abyssinian Expedition, and described the difficulties in which we had been landed in those expeditions by our utter state of unpreparedness. He would put this broad fact before the House. The Government could say that they had followed the lead indicated to them last year. With an increase of efficiency they had effected great economy. For the first time for eight years there had been no Supplementary Estimates; the sums voted for the Service for the year had been made sufficient, and more than sufficient. They showed on the Estimates an absolute reduction of £150,000. They had likewise appropriated for other urgent services for the defence of the country the sum of £170,000 more. Thus they had effected an economy of £320,000 without cutting down a single man or a single horse, while at the same time they added a small force to the Army. They had further provided and were providing new field guns for the whole of our two Army Corps. All that sum of £320,000 they had gained by sheer economy and hard work. They were proposing to spend £3,000,000 in a manner which the House evidently approved; and, under the circumstances, he would ask whether it was fair to say, as the hon. and gallant Baronet (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) had asked, they were always to go on living in a fool's paradise. Far from that, almost for the first time the state of the country, of the forces of the Crown, and of our national resources had been brought forward perfectly openly, so that the House was able to grasp the position. The hon. and gallant Gentleman who opened the discussion said the first thing he desired was that there should be such an organization at the the War Office that the soldiers who were responsible in time of war should also be responsible in time of peace. What more could he fairly ask for that had not been done already? As to the difficulties in the way of appointing this Commission, he would say this: They now had at the War Office Lord Wolseley, Sir Redvers Buller, General Brackenbury, and almost every one who had held commands in recent expeditions, and during the last six months there had been transferred to them the whole responsibility of the administration of the spending Department. Now, he knew no step the House could take beyond that, unless Parliament meant to take the control away from itself and give it to those who spent the money, and who could not sit in this House to justify their expenditure. Without the control of the Treasury it would be impossible to keep the Estimates down. Soldiers naturally had a desire to spend money. He would put this point clearly before the House. In the first place, if they put the whole thing into the hands of soldiers, however able they might be as administrators, they would not always agree as to what the money should be spent upon, and they would always make a compromise with each other, saying, "If you will spend what is necessary on my service I will spend what is necessary on yours." In that way no economy would be possible. He wouldnot, as to that, exclude sailors. The hon. and gallant Admiral said that we ought to do everything that was needed at once, and exercise a generous spirit. Well, but a generous spirit was often the word for universal squandering. What he would say was, we ought not to act in a niggardly spirit in doing what was necessary; but, at the same time, we ought not to do a single thing which was not absolutely necessary. He was inclined to ask this question—"Who were the economists to-night?" Last Session they heard a great deal in the Committee about the necessity of economy. The economists never rose to support a Minister. The whole tendency was on the other side. As to this Commission —if it were granted—were they to have on it Gentlemen who were anxious to spend, and also the hon. Baronet the Member for Cockermouth (Sir Wilfrid Lawson) and one or two other Gentlemen of the Peace at any Price Party, in order to establish on that Commission a proper equilibrium. If they had both, they would be certain to have a minority Report. The hon. and gallant Member for North-West Sussex said that there was great danger at present of a European war. Did it not occur to the House that if a Commission were appointed, and that if the Commission recommended the immediate expenditure of £12,000,000, £15,000,000 or £20,000,000, people would say in two or three years' time that their Report was made when a great war was expected? The scare would pass away, the war would be over, and a generation would arise which knew not Joseph, and which would criticize the system of hopeless, hapelss expenditure that had been established. Then the Commission was to be asked to decide what was needful in respect of foreign expeditions. He did not at first know what the expression meant, but it had been emphasized by the Mover of the Amendment and by the hon. and gallant Member for Birkenhead (Sir Edward Hamley). The Mover spoke of the aggression of Russia and the misfortune of allowing Bulgaria at this moment to be taken by Russia. But was it not a dangerous and an ominous suggestion to make that we should transfer to a Commission, which could only have a delegated authority, a responsibility that could only rest properly upon the Cabinet? He would draw attention to an important utterance last year by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) to the effect that if our foreign policy were conducted with skill and judgment, armaments would be unnecessary and taxation for them unjustifiable. It had, therefore, been laid down on the noble Lord's authority that the strength of our forces might depend upon the foreign policy of the Government. To put into the hands of a Commission authority that could only be properly wielded by a responsible Cabinet would be to make the Government a mere machine for carrying out the mandates of that Commission. Then there was the further objection that such a Commission could not sit without exposing every weakness in our defence to the eyes of the whole world? There was a Committee appointed to consult with the Secretary for War last year, and such a Committee might be continued with advantage. The appointment of a Commission would involve serious delay, for it could scarcely conclude its labours within two years, and he hoped the greater part of the proposed programme of his hon. and gallant Friend would be carried out by that time. The Government were far from saying that the present system was perfect, and they had taken such steps as they could to improve and strengthen its weak points, of which there were many, in which public opinion might strengthen the hands of the Secretary for War; but the Government could not accept a proposal which would impair their own responsibility for the Estimates. The Government hoped they might be favoured with the opinions of some of the non-military Members of the House; for, with all respect to the military Members and giving them full credit for desire to advance the interests of the country, irrespective of those of the Service, that was a subject that should not be discussed by military Members exclusively. So far, the discussion had been highly advantageous. He supposed it might be taken as a compliment to the framers of the Estimates that no exception had been taken to anything they either contained or omitted. In conclusion, he submitted that no case had been made out for a Commission, whose inquiries might prove to be a distinct disadvantage to this country.

Viscount EBRINGTON (Devon, Tavistock) said, that inquiry need not be shirked because of any possible disclosure, since foreign Governments probably knew our weaknesses as well as we knew them ourselves. It was suggested that the proposed Commission would take two years to report, and that the matter of our defences would be hung up in the meantime. He, however, thought that the programme of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) might be proceeded with pending the inquiry, and he should imagine that if the Commission were appointed it might present its Report within six months at the outside. The hon. Gentleman the Financial Secretary to the War Department (Mr. Brodrick) complained that hon. Members had not communicated to the Government any point to which they ought to work up. He (Viscount Ebrington) thought the Memorandum of the Secretary of State for War was a sufficient proof that he had a point he would like to work up to, if he was sure that public opinion would back him. He understood the right hon. Gentleman to state there that the programme was not an exhaustive one, or one which showed the full amount of the work which the Military Authorities thought necessary, or even desirable. He believed it would be of use to the House and the country that they should know what works the Military Authorities did think necessary. The hon. Gentleman the Financial Secretary seemed to think he had disposed of a good many of the previous arguments, when he said that a quarter of the Volunteer Force had been provided with great coats. In his opinion, however, great coats were things which they could afford to wait for, and there were many other things far more necessary which, unlike great coats, could not be improvised. Although the Volunteer Force might be so well provided with these garments, he found that the Secretary of State for War admitted that even the First Army Corps was not fully provided with all things necessary. And although he said that what was required would probable be completed without serious delay, yet unless the general opinion was incorrect there were some very important items in the shape of material which were not available, and which it would take some time to provide. Turning from general matters to points of more detail, he wished to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to a subject which, he thought, had not been touched upon in the discussion which had taken place—namely, the amount of Garrison Artillery which he proposed to provide for the defence of our Coaling Stations. The right hon. Gentleman, in his Memorandum of last year, spoke of the necessity of increasing that force by 1,800 men; and though the Memorandum of this year stated that all the necessary garrison artillery was provided, yet the Estimates only showed an increase in that force, deducting Mountain Batteries and men in Egypt, of 1125 over 1886-7 and 59 over 1887-8.

Mr. E. STANHOPE: The Estimate I gave in the Memorandum was the Estimate received from the War Office Authorities.

Viscount EBRINGTON said, that in that case those Authorities must have changed their minds a good deal since last year. He ventured to doubt whether the system they were pursuing with regard to heavy guns was the best system possible. Garrison service was by no means popular; it was generally conducted in out-of-the-way places, and it offered few opportunities for distinction. Under the present system an officer with a mule battery at Aldershot might be transferred to a 100-ton gun at Gibraltar; and he believed that officers were habitually transferred from Horse and Field Batteries to another branch of the Service which was now practically quite a distinct one. Such transfers might have been unavoidable and even desirable in old days when guns of position were not so very much heavier than those which an army might take with it for siege operations; but while the dimensions of these and of field guns were practically unaltered, heavy guns were now of enormous size and had become such complicated machines that he believed we ought to follow the example of other nations, and constitute a special corps of Fortress Artillery. Of course that could not be done all at once, but he would suggest that as a beginning the Royal Marine Artillery should be entrusted with the garrisoning of our Coaling Stations. There were many advantages in the plan he suggested—there was no difference between the great guns in these places and ships' guns, the men therefore, whether on land or at sea would be working guns to which they were accustomed. Secondly, there would be great advantage in respect of the health and lives of the men. Many of our Coaling Stations were dismal, unhealthy places, and it was well known that many men were invalided, and died and even committed suicide in them unless frequently relieved. Now, under the plan he proposed these men could be relieved easily by the men in the squadrons on the various stations; the men of the garrison being taken on board ship and replaced by others at short intervals, whenever most convenient to the Admiral on the station. He (Viscount Ebrington) reminded the right hon. Gentleman that this was not a new system; it had, in fact, been practised in various parts of the world by our Navy for more more than 100 years. The Diamond Rock in the old war afforded an instance of the practice. Ascension was another at the present time, while Port Hamilton also had been garrisoned by the China Squadron. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would see his way to adopting this system at the Coaling Stations.

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD (Marylebone, E.) said, he thought that the question of the defence of the country was exercising the mind of the people at the present moment more than anything else except the question of Home Rule. He did not intend that evening to touch upon the question of administration, although he believed the system was utterly wrong, that it invited extravagance, and was certainly adverse to economy. The time had arrived when they should drop Party altogether in these matters, and see what they could do to put the Services in order, because late events and statements made by experts went to prove that the services were not in order, though the country thought that they were. It seemed more or less ungrateful of the Service Members to agree on a Motion like that which his hon. and gallant Friend had brought forward. He (Lord Charles Beresford) admitted that the Secretary of State for War had done a very great deal for the Service, and there were many things in his Memorandum which were in the right direction, and with which he heartily agreed. But what he wanted to show was that these improvements would not help organization for war, and would not enable the Army, to a great extent, to fight any better; and more particularly they would not enable the country to know what was required for its defence. Only a Royal Commission such as was now proposed could possibly enable the country to see how it stood. The alteration of the system of administration in the War Office, by giving military men responsibility over the Departments, was apparently a very satisfactory point. But that responsibility was entirely a myth, or it would be, unless the Secretary of State for War could answer a question which he intended to put to him. It would be very much the same class of responsibility as that which the Sea Lords had at the Admiralty. At the Admiralty it was simply *nil.* For instance, our shipbuilding policy was dictated by the amount of money which the Party Head of the day thought he could spare for building ships, and not at all by the actual necessities of the case. His noble Friend had in his possession a paper which he had himself written, urging the necessity of building a great many more cruisers. But this matter they would have out on the Navy Estimates. Unless in the War Office the soldiers who were to be responsible were able to write out their demands and the reasons for them, and the country knew what they thought, the demands would be laid on one side as they were now; and then the Secretary of State would cut them down, and after that the Treasury would cut them down still further. The Secretary of State had proposed a loan of £2,200,000 in order to put the Coaling Stations and Maritime Ports in order. The House ought to know what sum the experts thought was necessary. He did not say that the country should go by what the experts said, but they ought to know what their opinions were.

Mr. E. STANHOPE: I gave the Estimates.

Lord CHARLES BERESFORD said, that that might be so; but what he wished to know was whether they were what the experts recommended? That he doubted. As to Treasury control, it was all based on unsound evidence, or else he should have been at the Admiralty now he believed. He had seen the bent bayonets, the broken cutlasses, the cartridges that jammed, and the shrapnel shell that did not explode in the Soudan. Major Hunter, when he examined his shells in the Soudan to see that everything was right before going into action, found that out of 110 shrapnel shells, 19 were empty, 29 were partly empty, 10 were damp, and one had the plug jammed. As to responsibility, they were working under the same system now. [Mr. E. Stanhope dissented.] Well, it was the same at the Admiralty. But when that happened who was hung for it? Who was even chided for it? The troops might have been at Metammeh, trusting to the shrapnel shell, waiting for the enemy to come within range; and had that been so, the shell would not have burst, the enemy would have been upon them, and would have done for them. That would have meant another expedition of an Army Corps from England. All this was the result of not having real responsibility from somebody, so that there would be somebody to be hung if anything went wrong. These shells might have been worth three times their weight in gold if they were all right; as it was, they were useless. Responsibility, as they now had it, was not worth a penny. In 1885, if we had gone to war, any seaman could have told the country that it would have lost its Mercantile Marine, and that its food supply would have been stopped. If that had come to pass, would poor Lord Northbrook have been hung? [*Laughter.*] It was no laughing matter, but a very serious question. What he wanted to prove, and would prove, was that the present system was utterly wrong and unbusiness-like. In 1885, Lord Northbrook said, if he had been given £2,000,000 —— [An hon. Member: £3,000,000.] £3,000,000, was it? It might as well been half-a-crown, because he said he would not have known what to do with it if he had to apply it to the Navy. Then war loomed in the distance, and Lord Northbrook asked for he did not know how many millions. [An hon. Member: £5,000,000.] £5,000,000, was it? Well, he ventured to say, and he appealed to the present First Lord to confirm him, that a very large sum of that was as good as thrown into the sea. And this because the system was bad, because there was no organization in time of peace to enable the country to fight in time of war. He would read to the House what Lord Wolseley said in a letter to the Secretary of State for War. Lord Wolseley, writing from the Soudan, said—

> "It is difficult for me to adequately describe the feelings with which I have read the enclosed papers, describing the condition of the ammunition supplied from Woolwich to the only battery of Royal Artillery which accompanied the column recently operating from Korti across the Bayuda Desert. In all our small wars the British soldier has to contend against enemies vastly superior in number, and it is only by superior discipline and the efficiency of our arms of precision that we can secure victory. I have already addressed your Lordship on the subject of the carelessness shown by those responsible at home for the quality of the ammunition supplied to the troops in the field, in issuing star shells of a different calibre from that of the guns of the battery serving here. I trust the new proof, contained in the enclosed papers, of the culpable negligence of some branch of department at home will lead to an inquiry into its working by a Board of selected officers of the Line, unconnected in every way with the Woolwich Manufacturing or Store Department, or with the administration under which they work. I write strongly because I feel strongly, when I think of how the lives of gallant soldiers may have been sacrificed in the present campaign, and may be again so sacrificed in the future, through the inexcusable carelessness of individuals in the Woolwich Arsenal, and through the unsoundness of a system under which such ammunition as that described in these enclosures could possibly have been issued for service in the field."

This was from a man who was responsible in time of war; but such men were not allowed to say anything in time of peace. Unless an expert had a seat in that House he had no hearing. It was only by proper organization in time of peace that we could be properly prepared for war. The country, he believed, would do anything to have its Army and Navy in the condition in which it ought to be and in which the people thought it was. Hon. Members objected to the Estimates because they saw the money was often spent in a wrong way and on a wrong system. It was suddenly found out when they went to war that they had not a lot of things which they ought to have had before the war was declared; and when money was spent in a panic they paid the highest price for the worst things. A Royal Commission would prevent such things as happened in 1885. It would prevent the scandals revealed in the Judge Advocate's Report. There was the question of the new shell with high explosives. Every nation except England had now got shells with high explosives, whether melanite, dynamite, or some other. In the new shell the velocity of dispersion was greater than the velocity of progression, and it burst all over the place in a circle. The French had actually spent £1,000,000 on melanite or other high explosive shells. The suggested Commission would find out how we stood in regard to that matter. He believed that if a French ship using these shells attacked one of our ships of the *Ajax* class, and one of those shells came into an important part of her and burst, it would knock a hole in her that would wholly unfit her to fight. He, as an expert, said that, and other experts would say the same. But, unfortunately, for Party reasons, the country never knew what the experts said. They might have to go to sea with those ships, and they would be in danger of having to meet and fight ships with those melanite shells. On ordinary business grounds, he asked why should not the country know exactly how they stood in regard to those things? There had been a great many comparisons drawn between this country, France, and Germany. Let them take the question of our stores. The Secretary of State for War ought to know all about the stores in this country. Let the right hon. Gentleman get up and tell them how much gunpowder they had got in this country. He believed that the right hon. Gentleman would be perfectly bald and gray if the country knew how much gunpowder they had, because the right hon. Gentleman knew perfectly well that they had got very little, and that every bit of it that was made abroad would be stopped if war broke out. All their accounts were mixed up. The Royal Commission ought to find out a normal. Every great Empire ought to have so many men and so many ships; and to that should be added whatever was required that was abnormal—such as rearming the army, defence of the coaling stations, protection of mercantile ports, and so forth.

Mr. E. STANHOPE said, that if the noble Lord would look at Vote 12, he would see that this year, for the first time, they had separated the warlike stores, showing what were the requirements for ordinary and what for extraordinary purposes.

Lord CHARLES BERESFORD said, that certainly was right, but it did not give them a normal. His remarks, though they seemed to apply to the Army, had great reference to the sister Service. [*Laughter.*] Hon. Members laughed; but it was impossible in the defence of this country to separate the two services. He noticed what the right hon. Gentleman stated, but he was not at all satisfied with the arrangement; he did not think it was at all a good one. He wished to remove a false impression which he had seen in the Press, and which had been conveyed to him by his Friends, in regard to his speeches. He believed that all the Service officers in that House agreed with him in this—they did not at all want that the experts should have the control of the administration. The soldier's and sailor's idea of administration was to give an order and carry it out; but the statesman's idea was very different. He had to administer by argument, and by a different method. The Heads of Departments—the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State for War—must necessarily, by the Constitution, have the power of coming into that House, and then also into the Cabinet. But what he complained of was that they did not consult their experts, or might not consult them. Under the present system those two Chiefs of Departments were perfect almighties—they could say "we" when it was only "I," and the country thought that the experts had a great deal more to say in the management of the Service than they really had, and looked upon them as being a great deal more responsible than they were. The views of those experts ought to be placed—he would not say before the country, though he should like to see them placed before the House—at least before the Cabinet, and until this was done things would not get right. The idea of the Parliamentary control, what was it? They were given a volume, and they criticized it. The Radicals—he must pay them the compliment of saying they generally did try to criticize it, but they took up the wrong thing and criticized it very severely; they really had no control, as they did not understand it. The same remark applied to the other side, because it was the fault of the system. If they had a definite thing given them, they would know what they were talking about. He said that their Parliamentary control was a myth. They were asked for a certain sum of money for certain purposes; but in an ordinary line of business they ought to know what was necessary and what they were paying for. They were asked to vote a certain amount in the Estimates, and when war occurred they had to pay goodness knew what, and most of their money was then wasted. He did not see the Chancellor of the Exchequer then present. He was a very bad hand to tackle; but the Treasury control also was just as much a myth. It was based upon unsound evidence. The Treasury never, or rarely, saw what the necessity of the case was, as, for instance, in the case of the Intelligence Department. The Parliamentary Heads of the Departments came to the Treasury and said so-and-so, and the Treasury went by their opinion, and not by the opinion of the soldiers and sailors. He did not want the Treasury to go by the opinion of the soldiers and sailors, but to see what the evidence really was. It was said that a Royal Commission took time. In his opinion, this matter was so important for the safety of the Empire that it should be attended to first of all. Let them have some system—some Plan of Campaign. At present there was not even a roster of ships for the various stations. That was not the way to carry on the defence of a great Empire at all. One thing he would like to ask was this—of what were the Government afraid in this Royal Commission? Were they afraid of France, or Germany, or any other country? He could assure them that if they wanted accurately to know the state of our defences, and every gun we had in the world, they could get the information by going to the Naval Attaché of any Embassy in London. Were they afraid of the British taxpayer? But the British taxpayer was, as it were, a shareholder in the business, and ought to know how his money was spent; at present he was in a perfect sea of blue dust, and knew nothing. He would only only ask the House of Commons whether they had found the system which they had got at present a satisfactory system? He maintained that it was a bad and utterly wrong one, and a Royal Commission would expose that system. All their bad expenditure was the result of the system of administration, and until they altered it they would never better themselves at all. Then his hon. Friend on the Front Bench said that this was very ridiculous—at all events, he had rather laughed at the idea of a Royal Commission. For his own part, he could not understand why. All that they asked of the Government was that the recommendations of their own Royal Commission should be attended to. That Commission had been presided over by Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, an eminent Judge, accustomed to balance evidence, and he, in the strongest terms, and in words almost identical with those used by the hon. and gallant Baronet the Member for North-West Sussex, had said—

> "The present system is directed to no definite object; it is regulated by no definite rules; it makes no regular stated provision either for the proper supply and manufacture of warlike stores, or for enforcing the responsibilily of those who fail to make them properly; or for ascertaining the fact that they are made improperly. It is to these defects in the system that we attribute most of the matters complained of."

Then, again, they found these words—

> "We think that the charge of inefficiency, both generally and in a variety of particular instances, has been proved to a considerable extent. We attribute this inefficiency to the defects in the system pointed out above."

This, it must be remembered, was the Government's own Commission. Then, with regard to the remedy, the Report went on to say—

> "We propose to remedy defects as follows:—A Commission, composed of men of the highest eminence and authority, should be formed to lay down a standard as to the amount of stores which should be kept in hand for the Public Service, and annual tables should be published showing how the existing stores stood in relation to this standard."

His hon. Friend behind him did not even ask for a standard, but that the question should come before a Commission of business men, and that the facts should be stated in such a way that the country might judge what ought to be done. There was nothing about a Vote of Censure on the Government in this proposal; nothing could strengthen their hands more.

MR. BRODRICK observed, that he did not say it would be a Vote of Censure, but that it might prove a serious matter, and do injury to the country.

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD said, that he certainly understood his hon. Friend to say that much, but something more as well. Now with regard to the question of economy, which was always preached whenever they went to address their constituents—["Hear, hear!" and *laughter.*]—Oh, yes; they were always preaching peace and reform and economy; they were bound to promise these things, but they could not have economy under their present system. If they wanted economy the system must be altered. What he asked was that they should not make this a Party question, but all join together to repair a system which had proved itself bad in every particular, and which, in his opinion, could not at all increase economy, but must increase extravagance, and which as long as it lasted would prevent their ever getting their Services in that state of efficiency which everybody desired.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I only wish, before the debate goes any further, to say a few words in order to remove a misapprehension which appears to have arisen. My hon. and gallant Friend (Sir Walter B. Barttelot), who introduced this debate, is, I know, thoroughly desirous to render every assistance to the Government in the discharge of their duty, and I regret that it is not in our power to accede to the terms of the Motion he has put upon the Paper, although my desire is to give the fullest credit to him and to those hon. and gallant Gentlemen who have supported him in all that they have said, and as regards the motives by which they have been actuated. I wish, therefore, to say a few words to justify the course which the Government think it right to take in the circumstances in which they are placed. My hon. and gallant Friend asked the House to approach Her Majesty, in order that she may be graciously pleased to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into and report upon the military and naval requirements for the protection of the Empire. Well, Sir, I listened to the speech of the hon. and gallant Member for South-East Durham (Sir Henry Havelock-Allan). He emphasized the demand that is made in the Motion by saying that it was a demand which must embrace the requirements of the Army and Navy for home protection, as well as the necessities for foreign service, and it also raises the whole question of the defence of India. Now, Sir, my hon. Friend the Member for the Guildford Division of Surrey, the Financial Secretary to the War Department (Mr. Brodrick), referred with very great force to the circumstances in which any such inquiry as is now asked for must be held. He quoted, with admirable effect, the speech made by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) last year, in which that noble Lord showed conclusively that the proportion or amount of even the normal expenditure and strength of the country must depend upon the policy of the Government and of successive Governments, and upon the view they took of their responsibilities. I should like, therefore, to ask how a Commission, largely composed of experts, could be charged with the duty of making provision for the interests of this great Empire so far as concerned the providing the strength which would be required for every contingency, at the same time removing all responsibility from the shoulders of the Government of the day? I can imagine no greater relief, if it were not cowardice to seek it, to any Government than to devolve upon a Royal Commission the duty which the Government now discharges. The Government would for the next three years, at any rate, be relieved of any responsibility for the extension of the defences necessary for the protection of the Empire. All we should have to do would be to keep things going in the best way we could, and changes in ships for the protection of commerce, or in fighting ships and other questions connected with the Departments, must be held over until this Commission has made its Report. I have heard a remark made by my hon. and gallant Friend that this Commission was one that would report at once. I have had very great experience of the assistance of experts, and can bear testimony to their loyalty both at the Admiralty and the War Office, and it would be unfair to them if I allowed it to be supposed that they held office without a great sense of their responsibility, without communicating freely to the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State, and without having the great satisfaction of knowing that their advice is followed as a rule on questions on which their advice ought to have the greatest weight. The amount of force required and of provision made rests upon the responsibility of the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State, checked and controlled to a great extent by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I should like to ask the House whether any system that could be devised could relieve the Ministers of the responsibility of making pecuniary provision for the Services in this House? I should prefer that the responsibility which at present rests upon Ministers should be insisted upon and maintained, though I am very far from saying that our system is perfect. I do not believe it to be perfect by any means. Even looking at the checks with which our Parliamentary system surrounds the Departments, it is almost impossible that they could avoid mistakes and to some extent errors and maladministration at times. But if you ask me whether it is desirable that there should be investigation into the system—a careful, persistent, and acute investigation — I should be perfectly ready to accept such an investigation. I have nothing whatever to hide; I have no desire whatever to maintain any portion of the organization or administration either of the Army or Navy which upon inquiry may be found to be defective. That is an object to which Parliament may properly direct its attention with a view to ascertaining to what extent the present Naval and Military systems are adapted to the national needs. Such an inquiry I am perfectly prepared to grant; but, Sir, I am not prepared to accept proposals which must relieve the Government of responsibility in the future. Change the system if you like, if there is anything wrong in it; deal with the organization if you please, if it is defective; but adhere strictly to the maintenance of the responsibility which up to this time has rested with the Ministers of the day to provide for the safety and protection of the country, and to present to Parliament such measures as they think necessary to present in their duty to the Sovereign, the State, and the Empire. I, Sir, for one, should be no party at any time to relieve them of that responsibility. We cannot devolve on a Committee of the House of Commons or a Royal Commission of irresponsible Gentlemen the duty of determining what force and what strength may be required for the protection of the country. It would be a mistake to suppose that officers of the Army or Navy are uniformly agreed in their recommendations to the Secretary of State. It would be absurd to suppose that they recommended but one scheme or one proposal, either as to the strength of the forces, or the plan necessary for the defence of the Empire. We have had, Sir, the assistance of experts and officers who have investigated particular questions, and I am sorry to say that, from the intricacies of those questions, they have frequently been years before they have arrived at a conclusion. Take, for example, the case of the new rifle, which has lately been the subject of investigation. I believe that rifle has been in the hands of a Committee of officers for four or five years, and now the decision arrived at is only a tentative one. The Government must under the present constitution—and it is for the House to say whether that constitution requires to be changed or not, but of course we must as Ministers of the Crown retain to ourselves responsibility for the proposals to be made to Parliament. We are willing to take Parliament into our confidence; we are willing that Parliament should examine into any point, any item, or existing institution as an institution. Parliament should find out, if it pleases, defects in those institutions, and may recommend changes; but so long as the Government remain in our present positions, we must, I regret to say, oppose the proposal of my hon. and gallant Friend, to whom we wish to give the fullest possible credit. We desire, however, to obtain absolute security for the Empire in a different manner and by different methods to those by which he seeks to do so.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Lord Randolph Churchill,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

MR. W. H. SMITH: I hope it will be understood that the Vote will be secured on Thursday, as that is absolutely necessary in the public interests.

Debate *adjourned* till *Wednesday.*

EAST INDIA (PURCHASE AND CONSTRUCTION OF RAILWAYS) BILL.

(*Sir John Gorst, Mr. Jackson.*)

[BILL 143.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, the Bill was not a Bill to allow the Secretary of State for India to enter into any new obligations; it was for the purpose of enabling him to raise money in a manner that would be economical to the Government of India. The Bill consisted of two parts—one enabling the Secretary of State to raise a sum of money for the purchase of the Oude and Rohilkund Railway, and the other enabling him to borrow a sum of money in the English market in connection with the guarantee of lines in India by the State. The Oude and Rohilkund Railway was made under contract in 1867, and the capital of that Railway was guaranteed by the State for 999 years at the rate of 5 per cent on a capital amounting to £4,000,000. But there was a clause in the original agreement giving the Secretary of State power at the expiration of 20 years to exercise the option of purchase, and, as at the present time the Indian Government could borrow money at less than 3½ per cent, it would be obviously for the interest of the Revenue of India that this option should now be exercised—because it must be exercised now or not for another ten years—and, accordingly, notice had been given to the Railway Company that the line would be purchased. The terms of the contract were that it should be purchased at a sum equal to the average market value of the capital stock during the three years immediately preceding the 2nd day of August, 1887. That had been calculated and found to amount to £125 18*s.* 0¼*d.* per cent. The effect of this purchase would be that the Revenues of India would be relieved to the extent of R.x. 33,295 a-year. That being the simple purpose of the first part of the Bill, there would be no opposition on the part of any Member of the House to allowing the Revenues of India to be benefited to that extent. The other portion of the Bill was not to enable the Secretary of State to make further guarantees, but to enable him to fulfil the guarantees already given to Railway Companies in a manner less onerous to the Indian Revenues. There were many Companies now in existence in India who were constructing new railways, and whose capital was guaranteed at from 3½ to 4 per cent by the Secretary of State for India. It had been suggested that, inasmuch as these Companies, even with the Secretary of State's guarantee, could frequently not borrow much under 4 per cent, and, whereas the Secretary of State could borrow money in the open market at 3¼ per cent, it would be better, instead of guaranteeing the interest, for the Secretary of State to borrow money and then lend it to the Companies. That had been the view which the late Mr. Lionel Cohen had pressed on the Government in the House, and it was the principle of two previous Bills, which, unfortunately, owing to the pressure of Public Business, did not become law; and now, under the more auspicious circumstances of the present Session, an attempt was being repeated to pass this measure, which would have the effect of saving the Revenues of India. There was no intention of using the powers of the Bill for the purpose of guaranteeing any fresh Company. The House would observe also that the Secretary of State was to lay before Parliament an account of the monies raised, and there would therefore be a check as to their application. He trusted, under the circumstances, the House would agree to the

Motion for the second reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir John Gorst.*)

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) said, he had no opposition to offer to the first part of the Bill, at any rate at this stage, for the purchase of the Oude and Rohilkund Railway. It would be for the Committee to consider whether the terms were satisfactory to the taxpayers of India. He avowed that it was desirable to obtain control over the railways of India, and although this was an instance in which we were paying the large premium of 26 per cent on the capital expended, he had no intention, as he had stated, of opposing the proposal then. The Notice of opposition he had placed on the Paper referred to the second part of the measure—namely, that which gave the Secretary of State power to raise any sum not exceeding £10,000,000 for constructing, extending, and equipping railways in India, and with regard to this he confessed that, after the declaration of the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) that no fresh Companies would be guaranteed, his objections were to a great degree removed. His feeling was very strong against the system of guaranteeing, and it seemed to him very strange that we should constantly be buying these railways at enormous premiums, and at the same time guaranteeing others. We had bought the East India, Eastern Bengal, and Scinde and Delhi Railways, and now we were buying the Oude and Rohilkund Railway at a heavy premium, which would have to fall upon the revenues of India. With regard to the argument that they were likely to save by the system now proposed of lending money to the Railway Companies, it certainly seemed to him somewhat extraordinary. He believed the hon. Gentleman had stated that the guaranteed Companies were able to borrow money at 3½ per cent, whereas the Government could borrow at 3¼ per cent—the difference being about ¼ per cent. Yet to those who made the railways we guaranteed 4 per cent *plus* a share of the profits. It seemed to him that if 3½ per cent was an extravagant rate, it must have been more extravagant to give the Companies a guarantee of something more than 4 per cent. The recently guaranteed railways were now at a high premium, the Nagpore line being at 10, and the Indian Peninsula line at 13 premium. The consequence of the present system was that constant pressure was put upon the Government for the guaranteeing of the Railway Companies, into the pockets of the promoters of which the State put 10 or 13 per cent. He was bound to express his belief that these guarantees had been given simply under pressure of the syndicates in the London market. That pressure the Government had for years resisted, but they were attacked in every way by the newspapers which charged them with obstructing the development of the resources of India. Those articles were promoted by syndicates, and when the matter came to be analyzed it was found that they were written because the Government had refused to give guarantees which would enable them to go into the market to make the premiums at which the stock stood. He was glad the Secretary of State was now very much opposed to these guarantees being given. The hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India told the House that there would be a saving of the difference between 3½ and 3¼ per cent by lending to the Companies; but he very much doubted whether there would be such a saving. The Government ought to beware lest the result of their arrangements should be to make the railways dearer to purchase hereafter. He thought it necessary, therefore, under the circumstances, to make his protest against the idea that this money might be used at all for the purpose of guaranteeing fresh railways. With regard to the old railways, he admitted that it was desirable to raise money in the cheapest way; but it seemed to him most impolitic and unwise, situated as the Government were in India, with a great Public Works Department, to allow the railways to pass out of their hands into the hands of syndicates, in cases where those people were not willing to make them at their own risk and with their own money.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.) said, he wished to ask the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India a question of some importance.

During the Session of 1874 a most important Committee, presided over at one time by the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) and at another by the right hon. Gentleman the present Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope), sat on the subject of Indian Railways, and the result of their inquiries was that they strongly deprecated any further guarantees of Indian Railways. He would like to know if the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State could assure the House that the policy then recommended would be strictly observed?

Sir JOHN GORST said, the policy recommended by the Select Committees of 1879 and 1884 had been observed as far as possible; and he was authorized to state that there was no present intention of guaranteeing any more railways in India.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) said, the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for India would have allowed the House to suppose that the full effect of the Bill was to relieve the revenues of India of a charge which was at present onerous. That might or might not prove to be the case. But the Bill, after all, meant the addition of over £20,000,000 sterling to the fixed debt of India. Considering that India was now suffering from depreciation of the rupee, and had liabilities in respect of it, he thought there was a strong reason against this proposal. But, in addition, it was proposed to buy up the railways, because the Indian Government was liable to pay 5 per cent. That liability might or might not be very heavy at present; it depended entirely on the earnings of the railways and the proportion between gross and net revenue. Now, the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary had not given the House any information as to the gross expenses or the gross or net income. If the railway paid nothing at all, the 5 per cent would be paid by the Government in its entirety. There was great danger with regard to the Oude and Rohilkund Railway that there would be the same experience with regard to it as in the case of every other railway in India—namely, that it will be found that the working expenses would bear a higher proportion to the revenue than would be at all healthy. Now, if the Government bought the line, and found that they had to pay not only 5 per cent. but the amount of the guarantee for which they were liable; if they had to pay the whole of the working expenses, and had in return but a small revenue, then the loss would be not only the present £10,000,000, but an annual deficit of 5 per cent guaranteed. These points were so important that he thought the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India ought to have laid upon the Table of the House such information in connection with them as he possessed.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness) said, he was very sorry that the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) did not move that the Bill be read that day six months. He was strongly opposed to the principle of the Bill, because at a time when the railway was beginning to pay and become a source of revenue to the Indian Government they were going to pay £125 for every £100 worth of stock. The drain for Home charges in India was at the present time so great that the country was being practically ruined, and the result was that the Government were compelled to raise the Salt Tax, which would be disastrous in its effects not only on the people of India, who could not buy enough salt for their own consumption, but upon the cattle, which would become diseased. With regard to the £10,000,000 asked for, he did not think that this sum ought to be added to the debt of India, because its effect would be to increase the Indian charges. For these reasons he should move that the Bill be read that day six months.

It being Twelve of the clock the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

COPYRIGHT (MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Addison, Bill to amend the Law relating to the recovery of penalties for the unauthorized performance of Copyright Musical Compositions, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Addison, Mr. Bartley, Mr. Dillwyn, and Mr. Lawson.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 156.]

RELIGIOUS PROSECUTIONS ABOLITION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Coleridge, Bill to abolish Prosecutions against Laymen for the expression of opinion on matters of Religion, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Coleridge, Mr. Crossley, Mr. Illingworth, and Mr. Courtney Kenny.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 157.]

TIMBER ACTS (IRELAND) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Arthur Balfour, Bill to amend the Acts relating to the planting of Timber Trees in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Arthur Balfour, Colonel King-Harman, and Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 158.]

House adjourned at ten minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 6th March, 1888.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills — *Committee* — Mortmain and Charitable Uses* (16-33); Pharmacy Acts Amendment (13-34).

Committee—Report—County Courts Consolidation * (5).

HOUSE OF LORDS—REFORM.

OBSERVATIONS.

Lord FITZGERALD said, their Lordships would recollect that in the early part of this Session a Notice was put on the Paper by the noble Earl (the Earl of Dunraven) to the effect that he would move—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, it has become desirable to alter and improve the constitution of the House; and that a Committee be appointed to report and inquire thereon."

That Notice was set down for Tuesday, the 6th of March. On Thursday last the noble Earl gave Notice that he withdrew that Motion, but that he would lay on the Table a Bill containing his propositions. Their Lordships were, of course, naturally anxious to see what those propositions were, as the subject was one of great interest and of great importance. On Saturday last his attention was called to a notice in *The Daily News* couched in very remarkable terms, and which no doubt attracted a great deal of attention. The notice was as follows:—

> "Lord Dunraven's House of Lords Reform Bill.—*The Central News* understands that the Bill for the reform of the House of Lords, of which the Earl of Dunraven gave Notice last evening, will propose to limit the number of Peers, the number fixed upon to be elected in equal proportion by the existing Peers, the new County Boards, and the Crown and the Prince of Wales, and the Law Lords to sit by virtue of their office. The measure will also provide that Members of the Upper House guilty of misconduct shall be dealt with by a properly-constituted tribunal, that the sons of Life Peers shall not enjoy courtesy titles, that Cabinet Ministers may speak in either House, and that Peers not elected to the Upper Chamber may be eligible for election to the House of Commons."

He confessed he was somewhat startled, perhaps he should rather say astounded, at this notice. Their Lordships would see that, according to the paragraph, the Bill embraced first the entire disestablishment of that House and sending it altogether away, and that it settled the number of the new House of Lords. They would assume for the moment that the number should be settled at 300; distribution of that number might be taken to be 75 to be chosen by the Crown, 75 by the Prince of Wales, 75 by the new County Boards, and that to their Lordships would be left 75—but from what sources?—including the creation of a tribunal to deal with Members guilty of any misconduct. Excluding for misconduct might embrace everything from murder down to the most trivial offences. He had no desire whatever to intrude himself into this question, in which he had only an individual interest as one of the public at large. But it seemed to him to be so important as to warrant him in departing from ordinary precedent by putting a Question to a private Member of that House, especially as that private Member had laid the foundation of the question by withdrawing the Notice he had given and substituting another—namely, that he would present to their Lordships a Bill containing his propositions on the subject. It had struck him that there might be something authentic in the paragraph, and therefore he thought it desirable that some inquiry should be made about it. He did not seek at the present moment to initiate any discussion upon the question or to enter upon any controversial matter. He simply sought for an Answer to the Question of which he had given the noble Earl private Notice. He had given him Notice of two Questions, but the one which he now intended to ask was whether the notice which he had read from *The Daily News* of Saturday last contained and expressed the substance or an approximation to the substance of the measure which the noble Earl had given Notice that he would lay on the Table of the House. He sincerely hoped that their Lordships might be able to get an answer to this Question, and that the answer would be in the negative.

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN, in reply, said, that he had looked at the paragraph which the noble and learned Lord had quoted, and that he shared in the astonishment with which the noble and learned Lord had regarded it. The noble and learned Lord asked him whether the statement made in *The Daily News* on the authority of *The Central News*, approached approximately to his ideas on the subject of what might be necessary for the reform of the constitution of that House. It was somewhat difficult to say whether a proposition rather wide did or did not approach approximately to propositions which might be held to be sound and legitimate; but so far as regarded the statement all he had say about it was this, that, as far as he was concerned, it was an entirely unauthorized programme. The impossibility of it was patent on the face of the propositions themselves, because he was made to say that he intended to do things which, in the nature of them, appeared to him to be absolutely impossible. He was made in that paragraph to desire to interfere with rights which were inherent in the Crown, and to interfere with the law of the land by constituting some special tribunal. He did not know what might happen to a man in the present day who attempted anything of that kind; but, at any rate, he had no desire whatever to run the risk of losing his liberty in a lunatic asylum or his head on Tower Hill. It was also said that he desired that the sons of Life Peers should not enjoy courtesy titles. He rather fancied that the sons of Law Lords did not get courtesy titles at all, and to take away from a man that which he did not possess would surpass the transcendent power of Parliament itself. He would therefore answer the Question of the noble and learned Lord with a distinct negative. The propositions their Lordships had heard did not represent his views on this great subject. It was impossible for him to say when it was probable that he would lay his Bill on the Table. Their Lordships would understand the great difficulty of drafting a Bill of this complicated nature, and all he could say was that he should use his best endeavours to lay it on the Table as soon as was practicable.

PRIVATE BILLS.

Ordered, That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after *Friday* the 22*nd day of June* next:

That no Bill originating in this House authorizing any inclosure of lands under special report of the Land Commissioners for England, or confirming any scheme of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales, shall be read a first time after *Friday* the 11*th day of May* next:

That no Bill originating in this House confirming any provisional order or provisional certificate shall be read a first time after *Friday* the 11*th day of May* next:

That no Bill brought from the House of Commons authorizing any inclosure of lands under special report of the Land Commissioners for England, or confirming any scheme of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales, shall be read a second time after *Friday* the 29*th day of June* next:

That no Bill brought from the House of Commons confirming any provisional order or provisional certificate shall be read a second time after *Friday* the 29*th day of June* next:

That when a Bill shall have passed this House with amendments these orders shall not apply to any new Bill sent up from the House of Commons which the Chairman of Committees shall report to the House is substantially the same as the Bill so amended:

That this House will not receive any petition for a Private Bill after *Tuesday* the 24*th day of April* next, unless such Private Bill shall have been approved by the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice; nor any petition for a Private Bill approved by the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice after *Thursday* the 17*th day of May* next:

That this House will not receive any report from the Judges upon petitions presented to this House for Private Bills after *Thursday* the 17*th day of May* next:

Ordered, That the said orders be *printed* and *published*, and affixed on the doors of this House and Westminster Hall. (No. 32.)

PHARMACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

(*The Earl of Milltown.*)

(NO. 13.) COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order).

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN said, he had heard, since the second reading of the Bill, that it was no uncommon thing for qualified chemists and druggists to open branch shops, and put unqualified persons in charge of them. He thought all would agree that that constituted a very serious danger to the public, and imposed a great hardship on properly qualified assistants who had gone through a course of training and passed examinations which cost time and money. This practice was distinctly in contravention of the Act of 1868; but it had been held that under that Act prosecutions could not be sustained against persons who did this, and he, therefore, begged to move the insertion of a new clause to alter that state of things.

Moved, to insert the following clause:—

"It shall be unlawful for a duly-qualified keeper of an open shop for retailing, dispensing, or compounding poisons to keep open shop in more places than one unless he shall engage and employ at each branch shop a person who would himself be a duly-qualified keeper of an open shop for retailing, dispensing, or compounding poisons, and such person is *bonâ fide* occupied in such branch shop; provided always that each partner in a duly-qualified partnership may keep a separate open shop for retailing, dispensing, or compounding poisons. Every keeper of an open shop for retailing, dispensing, or compounding poisons acting in contravention of the preceding section shall for every such contravention be liable to pay a penalty of £5, and the said penalty may be sued for and recovered in the manner provided by the Pharmacy Act, 1852, for the recovery of penalties under that Act."—(*The Earl of Milltown.*)

LORD THRING said, he objected that the Amendment had reference only to branch shops, and did not deal with the main shop at all, so that a man would still be able to employ unqualified assistants in the main shop. In his opinion the clause was redundant, as the case was met by the Act of 1868.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY pointed out that the Amendment dealt only with the question of vending poisons. Prescriptions might be sent to a druggist for preparation which contained no poisons at all, but which, if badly prepared, might cause very serious consequences.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY) said, he should support the Amendment. There were, it was said, cases in which a qualified druggist owned several shops and left them in charge of unqualified persons while attending to only one himself, and the object of the Amendment was to put a stop to this and provide that any person in charge of a branch shop should also be duly qualified.

LORD HERSCHELL pointed out that the Amendment only dealt with branch shops, and there was nothing in it to prevent the proprietor absenting himself entirely from his chief establishment and leaving it in charge of some unqualified person.

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN said, the noble and learned Lord might bring forward an Amendment on Report if he considered it necessary to carry out his view. It was his own desire to protect, as far as possible, the public from the danger of drugs being dispensed by other than duly qualified persons. At the same time it was not advisable to overweight the Bill, as that might increase the opposition to be encountered in the other House.

Amendment *agreed to:* the Report thereof to be received on *Friday* next; and Bill to be *printed* as amended. (No. 34.)

NAVY—POSITION AND PAY OF LIEUTENANTS.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

LORD SUDELEY, in rising to ask Her Majesty's Government, Whether the Admiralty propose to take any steps to improve the position and pay of lieutenants and to remove the block which at present exists in that list? said, the Question had been answered to a great extent in the proposed programme of the First Lord of the Admiralty. In the Memorandum he was glad to see that the grave condition of affairs had been frankly acknowledged and was stated to be one of "undoubted hardship." It was there allowed that, whereas in 1875 the numbers of lieutenants of 16 and 20 years' service as commissioned officers were 12 and three respectively, the relative numbers now were 208 and 53. The First Lord also confirmed the statement that only two out of every nine could ever be promoted, and thus the wretchedness of their position was made only too apparent. It was proposed to ameliorate in some measure this very grave state of things by giving a small addition of pay of 2*s.* per day after eight years' service, and the Memorandum gave the impression that there would be a further 2*s.* a-day after 12 years' service. But if he understood the matter rightly, the second 2*s.* was not increased pay—this was merely moving what was now given at the end of 10 years to the end of 12 years. He hoped the noble Lord would explain whether this was so or not, as it seemed very misleading. The greatest credit was due to the First Lord for proposing even this small additional pay at the end of eight years, but he felt bound to say that far stronger steps were necessary to put the list on a sound and proper footing. Even in this question of pay he doubted whether they were doing enough. He questioned very much whether an English lieutenant was as well paid as a lieutenant in the French Navy, where he understood that about £50 a-year was allowed for table money. The senior lieutenants ought certainly to have more. In any case, there were many points in the positions of lieutenants which required improvement. The age of the list was so rapidly increasing — nearly a quarter of the list being now over 10 years' standing —that some step ought to be taken to remove the block. It was clear that if the Admiralty could only promote two out of every nine this state of things must rapidly increase. It had been acknowledged over and over again that this list, which was the backbone of the Service and from which all our captains and Admirals were drawn, ought to be a thoroughly efficient body of officers, young, and full of zeal. Everyone connected with the Service was aware that when a lieutenant was over 12 years in seniority he was bound to become discontented and unsettled, as he knew that he had little chance of being promoted, and had become too old for the position he filled. There was only one remedy besides promotion that was possible for this state of things, and that was to give officers when they reached the age of about 33 or 35 the opportunity of retiring if they so wished, and of seeking some other employment before they were too old. He was aware that at the present moment this could not be done, because the list had not reached its full strength of 1,000, and there were not sufficient sub-lieutenants ready, but, at the same time, the right course for the Admiralty to take was at once to make known to the lieutenants as a body that as soon as the list should have got up to the full number a considerable number of lieutenants would be allowed to retire every year, at the discretion of the Admiralty, at the age of 33 or 35, with an increased retirement of, say, £100 a-year over what they would get if they were to hang on till they were 40.

THE EARL OF BELMORE said, that he was the person who originally brought this question, so far as it related to increased pay, before the House five years ago. He had then asked that eight years' standing should be the period at which a lieutenant should receive extra pay. The following year the noble Earl opposite, then First Lord of the Admiralty, granted them 2*s.* a-day at 10 years' standing. He had only asked for 1*s.* Now, it appeared by the Memorandum of the present First Lord, just published, that, under certain conditions as to service, they would receive 2*s.* a-day at eight years' standing, and another 2*s.* at 12 years' standing. He expressed his thanks to the First Lord for this concession. He would abstain from saying anything on the questions of promotion and retirement, which he had not studied.

LORD ELPHINSTONE said, there was no doubt whatever that, owing to the stagnation of promotion, the position of many of the lieutenants was one of very great hardship. Their Lordships might remember that, in reply to a Question put by the noble Lord last year, he entered very fully into the causes which had led to the state of the various lists and to the difficulty of insuring a uniform and steady flow of promotion through those lists. With regard to the lieutenants, he pointed out that in 1879 the number of commanders was fixed at 225, and the number of lieutenants at 800. In that same year it was determined that the navigating class should be abolished, and the duties of navigating undertaken by the lieutenants, the number of lieutenants being increased to 1,000. One thousand lieutenants had, therefore, to be passed into a list of 225 commanders, which was, of course, an impossibility, it being impossible to make four go into one. Last year the present Board of Admiralty, finding that employment could be given to a greater number of commanders, determined that that list should be gradually increased by 45. The effect of this increase would be that, whereas formerly only two out of every nine lieutenants rose to be commanders, two out of every seven would now attain that rank. His noble Friend suggested that the pay of lieutenants should be increased, and he was glad to be in a position to inform him that from April the pay would be increased. Lieutenants of eight years' seniority, on completion of six years' service, three of them having been spent in a ship of war at sea, would get 12*s.*; lieutenants in independent command would have 13*s.*; lieutenants of 12 years' seniority, on completion of nine years' service, six of them having been spent in a ship of war at sea, would have 14*s.*; lieutenants in independent command receiving 15*s.* By the present regulations lieutenants might retire at the age of 40, and must retire at the age of 45, and the Admiralty did not propose to make any change. When, in 1879, it was determined to abolish the navigating class, all entries into that class were stopped. About the same time the number of entries of naval cadets was comparatively small and irregular. There had been a want of correct and sufficiently frequent calculations in past years. The result was that the combined lists—by which he meant the lists of lieutenants, staff commanders, navigating lieutenants, and sub-lieutenants—had fallen, were still falling, and would continue to fall until the year 1892 or 1893. The lieutenants' list and the sub-lieutenants' list were below their proper strength, and 42 lieutenants were doing sub-lieutenants' work. Therefore, until the lists should be in such a position as to supply a sufficient surplus of officers, no optional retirement could be allowed before the established age of 40. During the last two years the number on the combined list had fallen by 25, and until the recent more regular and systematic entry of naval cadets made itself felt the lists would be incomplete, and it would not be possible to allow officers to retire at an earlier age than that of 40. His noble Friend referred to the lieutenants in the French Navy. He was not quite sure, but his impression was that the noble Lord was correct. He did not like to say so positively; but he should be happy to obtain the information if the noble Lord wished for it. The subject was one to which the Admiralty were really paying great attention. They felt the position of lieutenants was a serious and grave one, and they were trying in every way they could to meet the difficulties of the case.

House adjourned at a quarter past Five o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 6th March, 1888.

MINUTES.] — Private Bill (*by Order*)—*Second Reading*—Bristol Water.

Public Bills—*Ordered—First Reading*—Distress for Rent (Dublin) * [159]; Steam Boilers * [160]; Reformatory Schools Act (1866) Amendment * [161].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

—o—

BRISTOL WATER BILL (*by Order*).

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Lewis Fry.*)

Mr. LLEWELLYN (Somerset, N.) said, he proposed to be as short as he could in the remarks he intended to make. He did not intend to offer any apology to the House for bringing the matter forward at that stage, because he believed that when he had concluded his remarks and pointed out the objections that existed to this Bill, no apology would be deemed necessary. The Bill was promoted by the Bristol Water Works Company, with a view of taking water from a valley in Somersetshire, situated some 15 miles from Bristol. It was not put forward by the Corporation of Bristol—on the contrary, the Corporation of Bristol had petitioned against it. It was not the opposition of another Company, or from the land interest only, nor did the opposition come from the manufacturing interest. It came solely from the inhabitants of the valley affected, who were engaged in agricultural pursuits, and a great number of whom were small owners. The land owners could take up their own case and fight their own battle, and, as a rule, were able to get clauses inserted in a Private Bill, so that its provisions did them no harm, but in some instances a great deal of good. In this case the inhabitants were not in the position of landowners, but they were fighting for their own property and that greatest gift of Providence—a bountiful supply of beautiful water. The Petition against the Bill was got up by the inhabitants of the district, and joining with them were the Rural Sanitary Authority, the Drainage Commissioners, and the Charity Trustees. He would point out, in the first place, that the inhabitants themselves, at a public meeting, empowered a Committee to act on their behalf in opposing the Bill. The Rural Sanitary Authority joined in the opposition by unanimously affixing their seal to the signature of the inhabitants. The Drainage Commissioners had an important duty to perform, not only in clearing the land of superfluous water, but in preserving the water that was necessary for dividing fields and property. The Charity Trustees also joined the inhabitants in their opposition, and he might explain that the fund of the Charity Trustees, which arose from the land they had in this valley, was employed to keep up Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, where some 200 poor boys were maintained. If hon. Members would look through the Bill they would see that the first part of it was directed to the taking wholesale two streams of water rising from the side of the Mendip Hills. There were three villages on the two streams he had indicated which depended upon them for the supply of water, and it was the only water available in the valley for agricultural purposes. At Rickford it was the only source of supply. Sometimes for months together these streams were the only places where the inhabitants of the district could get water. It occasionally happened that the wells ran dry, and then these streams provided the sole supply, and the farms in the valley were laid out so as to benefit by these streams. It was propose to take these streams bodily away; and, in addition, he might point out that no consideration for the requirements of the inhabitants was to be expected from this Company. The source of one of the streams was the property of a gentleman who was a Director of the Bristol Water Works Company. He had made an ornamental pond, and built a boathouse on it. There was also a waterfall, and ten yards below this the water was put in pipes and carried to Bristol, but not before he had erected a pumping engine for the supply of his own residence and farm. Nothing could happen to him, nor could a single drop of water go direct to the Company of which he was a Director until he had supplied his own wants. There were two pumping stations to be erected in the valley, and these pumping stations, as far as he could make out, were to cost something like £250,000. They were told that these two pumping stations were to have shafts of indefinite depth, and from them would run three large drifts. The opponents were advised by their engineer that the effect of this pumping upon the shallow wells in the neighbourhood would be to lower them in every case, and in many cases to dry them up altogether, as had been shown in the next valley, where the same Company had erected pumping stations with most disastrous effect. He would remind the House that, although there were only four parishes in the valley, they were scattered all over it. They embraced a large number of very small holdings—a great bulk of the owners of which, although they owned the land which they tilled, had no title to show. They were supplied by shallow wells, and this system of pumping would suck the water from them; and if the inhabitants dug deeper, why, of course, the Water Works Company would go deeper still. One landowner, in reference to the pumping station in the next valley, got a clause inserted in the Bill; but it had never been attended to at all, and the water flowing from the stream was greatly diminished throughout the whole of last summer, and the agriculturists of the valley were put to great trouble and inconvenience. He held in his hand a Petition signed by the inhabitants of four parishes against the Bill. As he had said, the district was one belonging chiefly to small owners, and there were altogether, he thought, 160 owners in the four parishes. He was not quite sure, but he believed that the Petition was signed by 600 persons. It was a Petition from the inhabitants, and every person whose name appeared upon it was a resident occupier; some of them could only made their mark. So anxious were the inhabitants to oppose the Bill, that in some instances nearly the whole of the resident occupiers had signed the Petition. In one parish—that of Churchill—122 out of 145 had signed the Petition; and in another parish 73 out of 85. That would show the House the sort of people who would be affected by the Bill. In regard to the Rural Sanitary Authority a question was raised of the highest importance. He had had the honour since 1875 of being Chairman of the Sanitary Authority, and he was able to say that as soon as this scheme was put forward it was received by that authority with the greatest possible alarm. Hon. Members, especially those who took an interest in county matters, would be aware that under the Acts of 1875 and 1878, the Water and Public Health Acts, the Sanitary Authority had to supply every house with water sufficient for domestic and other purposes, and it was further provided that no house should be certified as fit for occupation until it was reported to the Sanitary Authority that a sufficient supply of fresh water had been provided. In addition, under these Acts the Sanitary Authority had no power to apply 1*d.* of the rates in defending their position. Therefore, they had to sit with their hands folded while they saw this scheme being passed through Parliament, which would deprive them of the water they were bound to give to the people. He would ask the House how the Rural Sanitary Authority was to supply the people with water if the Bristol Water Works Company were to take it all away? The Sanitary Authority had no power to apply the rates in opposing the Bill, but it was their duty to supply the water, and when that water was taken away from them it would be necessary to expend a large sum of money and to impose heavy taxation upon the locality in order to replace it. Even then, where the water was to come from they had no idea whatever. It might occur to hon. Members that it would be a good and sufficient answer to the course he proposed to take on this occasion when it was said that a large town like Bristol must be supplied with water for its increasing population. That was no doubt the case, but he had an answer to that statement—namely, that Bristol might be amply supplied from the spring which some time ago broke into the Severn Tunnel of the Great Western Railway. Last year a Company, called the Bristol Consumers' Company, was formed to supply Bristol with this water. The Company introduced a Bill into Parliament, which went before a Committee of the House of Lords. It was opposed by the Bristol Water Works Company—the very Company now promoting this scheme—simply because it would interefere with the profits of the Company. But in fighting the Bill it came out that the greatest argument of the Bristol Water Company was that it was unnecessary to bring this water supply into Bristol at all. The Bristol Company made that their chief case. A question was put to Mr. Alexander, the Secretary of the Company, by Mr. Bidder to this effect—"You have not only sufficient water for your present purposes, but looking a long way ahead?" The answer of the Secretary was—"Yes, ample," and that was the reply given by the Company a year ago, and formed a good answer, he thought, to those who maintained that it was necessary for Bristol to have this water. The Great Western Railway Company had a Bill before Parliament this year, and that Bill contained a clause by which they were authorized to sell this spring to any Corporation or Company. At the present moment there were millions of gallons pumped out of the Severn Tunnel daily which were running to waste. In addition to this fact, he would point out that there were other sources of supply. There was a Water Company in the immediate neighbourhood of Bristol, called the West Gloucestershire Company, and that Company was in a condition to supply Bristol and all its increasing wants. The Secretary of the Bristol Company said a year ago that their supply was ample, and he held in his hand a telegram received from the West Gloucestershire Company only that day, which was as follows:—

> "West Gloucestershire Company are in position to supply any deficiency of Bristol Company's resources within a week from the date of order."

Therefore, he would put it to the House that there were other sources from which Bristol could be supplied. But the promoters of this Bill took this one because it was the nearest and cheapest, and they would not have to pay for it. He knew he was taking an unusual course in opposing a Private Bill upon the second reading, but he wished to make it perfectly clear what the reason of his doing so was. He had been asked by the inhabitants of the valley to oppose its present stage for this reason—the subscription list which had been opened and the Petition which been presented against the Bill did not emanate from the landowners, but from the residents in the valley, and the funds for opposing the Bill had been raised by public subscription. Small sums had been subscribed by 420 different persons. Perhaps the House might imagine that a large subscription list like that ought to realize a considerable sum of money, but he would remind the House of the fact that the subscribers were very small owners, and that 253 sums were between £1 and 3*d.* Cottagers had come in large numbers who wished to subscribe, even from a distance, and the result was that a large number of the amounts subscribed ranged from 3*d.* to £1, with the object of fighting for what the people knew to be their means of obtaining a livelihood. Now, the expense of fighting this question upstairs would be tremendous. He did not know whether anything was likely to be done in that respect, but he sincerely hoped that in the course of the present Session some change would be effected. To give an instance of the course pursued, the inhabitants were told by their agent that it was necessary to be prepared with analyses of the water. They were told that to bring such evidence forward as would weigh the evidence given on behalf of this rich Water Company, it would be necessary to deposit 100 guineas before any analyst would be induced to leave his office in London to make the analyst report. It might be urged that the Bill provided a compensation reservoir to supply the wants of the inhabitants of the district, but he had carefully studied the Bill, and from the beginning of it to the end there was no provision for compensation. There was a clause to this effect—and it included the whole of the obligation of the Company—that where the pipes passed those who lived within 100 yards of the main pipe when the pressure was sufficient should be enabled to take water. But who was to know when the pressure was sufficient? He was well acquainted with the district, many of these people were his constituents, and he knew how seriously they would be affected if the Bill were allowed to pass. He thought he had made a clear case, even out of the statements of those who had brought forward the Bill, for dealing with the measure as a matter of principle. He maintained that there was a great question of principle involved. It was a question of might against right. The Bristol Water Company was an enormously rich Company, and unless the inhabitants opposed their scheme they would find themselves robbed of their water for ever. It was a dairy farming district, and those who knew anything of agriculture knew that every drop of water which could be procured was required for dairy operations. He appealed to the House not to allow the Bill to go one step further, and he trusted that hon. Members would not support a measure which was only introduced for the purpose of putting money into the pockets of the Directors and shareholders of one of the richest Companies in the Kingdom, composed of the merchants of Bristol, at the expense of a community who found it very hard indeed at present to make two ends meet.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.), in seconding the Amendment, said, he did so for this reason. He had some personal knowledge of the water supply of the district, and he recollected that only last year a scheme to supply Bristol with water from the Severn Tunnel was defeated by the Bristol Water Works Company and the Corporation solely on the ground that the existing supply would last for many years. Only within the last few days the Corporation of Bristol had an offer of 3,000,000 gallons of water at something like 4*d.* per 1,000 gallons, yet this rich Corporation, instead of accepting that offer from a competing Water Company, preferred to come down and take the water from a poor district where there were hardly any resident landlords, and occupied, as his hon. Friend had pointed out, by a small agricultural population. He begged to second the Amendment, and he hoped that the House would refuse to read the Bill a second time.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Llewellyn.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. LEWIS FRY (Bristol, N.) asked the permission of the House to say a few words as one of the Members for the large city which was deeply interested in the question, and to urge the House not to depart from the usual course of sending Bills of this kind to a Select Committee. It was not necessary for him to say one word as to the vast importance of a sufficient supply of water to a large and increasing community. He wished the House clearly to understand that this Company was the only Company which brought water to the inhabitants of Bristol, and it was required to supply an area containing a population of nearly 300,000 persons. The House would, therefore, see that a sufficient supply of water to a vast community of that sort was one of great importance, and well worthy of the consideration of Parliament. His hon. Friend the Member for North Somerset (Mr. Llewellyn) had pointed out that the present Bill was not promoted by the Corporation of Bristol. He should like the House to know what the relations of the Corporation with the Water Company were. No doubt this was an independent Company, but it had been in negotiation with the Corporation of Bristol more than once for the transfer of its works to the Corporation, and there was little doubt that before long the transfer would be made. It was quite a mistake to suppose that the Corporation of Bristol were opposed to the Preamble of the present Bill. He had the authority of the Town Clerk of Bristol to say that, although the Corporation had presented a Petition against the Bill, it must not be supposed that they were opposed to the Preamble, but that all their requirements might be met by the introduction of clauses in Committee. As to whether Bristol required more water or not, he thought he could very shortly satisfy the House that that was the case. The present requirements of the inhabitants were 8,000,000 gallons of water per diem in summer and 6,500,000 on the average of the year, and last summer there was only a difference of 1,000,000 gallons between the average requirements of the district and the present water supply. He maintained that that margin was far too narrow to be safe, although the Company had taken power to construct a large reservoir which would increase their supply by 9,000,000 gallons. They were, therefore, justified in coming to the House of Commons and asking to be allowed to increase their supply. Reference had been made to the opposition of the Corporation to the Bill which was promoted last year. The Corporation of Bristol then passed a Resolution that they considered there was an urgent necessity for a further supply. Their Resolution was to this effect—

> "That this meeting is of opinion that a further supply of pure and wholesome water is urgently required for the City of Bristol."

His hon. Friend the Member for North Somerset (Mr. Llewellyn) said they could have obtained all they required by taking the supply from the Sudbrook Wells. But a Committee of the House of Lords heard the whole of that case, and, after going carefully through the evidence, condemned that supply as unsuitable to the City of Bristol. The counsel for the Company, at the conclusion of the inquiry, asked the Chairman of the Committee to express an opinion as to the suitableness of that source of supply, and this was the reply—"The majority of the Committee are of opinion that it is not a good supply to be taken to the town of Bristol."

MR. LLEWELLYN asked what the hon. Member was quoting from?

MR. LEWIS FRY said, he was quoting from a Report of the proceedings of the Committee of the House of Lords last year, and he thought that was a complete answer to the assertion of his hon. Friend that the Sudbrook supply was suitable for the City of Bristol. There could be no doubt that a further supply was required. He would not trouble the House by going into details as to the mode by which the proposed supply was to be given, nor the situation of the streams and wells proposed to be diverted to which his hon. Friend referred. Of course it would be in the power of a Select Committee to deal with that question as they chose, in the event of the Bill being sent upstairs. If it could have been shown that an injury would be done by the diversion of these streams, it would be in the power of the Committee to impose terms upon the Company or to strike out the clauses referring to them altogether. The House would see that it was impossible to discuss, at the present stage, questions such as that which depended upon scientific evidence. If Bills that came before the House of Commons were to be refused a second reading on grounds of this nature, in which there was no question of public policy, it would be difficult hereafter for any Water Bill, or any other Bill of a similar character, to be passed into law. In regard to the pumping stations to which reference had been made, they would depend on the supply of water underground, the use of which was objected to. Surely that was pre-eminently a scientific question, and it was one upon which, and he said it with great respect, that House was incapable of forming an opinion. It was a mistake to suppose that all the underground water was to be taken, as his hon. Friend seemed to suggest; but if a Water Company was not to have access to underground water, it would be impossible to supply a large city like Bristol with water at all. It would be a most dangerous precedent to throw out a Bill of this description merely on the assertion that it took away the underground water and might injure the wells. If underground water was not to be used, a number of their great towns, including Birmingham, Liverpool, Nottingham, and Sunderland, could not be supplied, because they depended, to a large extent, on underground water. Therefore, it would be a dangerous proceeding for the House to arrive at a general conclusion that it was improper to have recourse to underground water for the supply of a large town. He would not detain the House longer. He appealed to hon. Members to allow the Bill to be discussed and decided by the only tribunal that was competent to deal with it. The promoters of the Bill were prepared to disprove the statements which had been made by his hon. Friend as to the injury which was likely to be done to the inhabitants of this valley. If the matter were brought before a Select Committee they had a full reply to the case of the opponents, and he would appeal to the House whether it was not a hardship on the inhabitants of a populous city like Bristol to refuse to send the Bill before a tribunal where it could be adequately investigated? It was said that the opponents were unable to incur the cost of appearing before a Committee. The House must not run away with the idea that they were all of them poor persons. There were among them men of large wealth, including a noble Duke, who was well able to give his assistance to the case of the opponents of the Bill before a Select Committee. The inhabitants of Bristol sincerely trusted that the Bill would receive the sanction of Parliament, and he made an earnest appeal on their behalf to the House not hastily to throw out the measure, but to send it to the only tribunal which was able to deal with it properly.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.) said, he had the honour to represent the commercial and industrial portion of the City of Bristol, which would be seriously affected if the proposal to throw out this Bill on the second reading were carried. It must be apparent to the House that the main reason why the Water Company was obliged to come to Parliament for the means of obtaining an additional supply of water was that the dryness of the season last year had materially altered the condition of things. There had been at least one-third less rainfall than was ordinarily the case, and one-third of the water which was generally used for storage was denied to the Companies who provided great towns with water. In this case the Bristol Water Company had no alternative, but were compelled to come to Parliament with a Bill to enable them to supplement their supply in connection with a large reservoir they had already power to construct, and were, in fact, constructing. If they were allowed to carry out the present scheme their supply would be ample. At the present moment 8,000,000 gallons of water were required by Bristol daily, and very soon the city would require 10,000,000. Everyone knew that the water supply of a large town was a most important thing to consider, but he wished to speak more particularly on behalf of the commercial and industrial classes. If the supply of water fell short the trade and industry of the city would be very much deranged. The Water Company proposed to take a large portion of the supply from underground, and his own impression was that in most of these cases the supply was taken, not from the surface, but underground. He ventured to say, as a geologist, that his hon. Friend the Member for Somerset (Mr. Llewellyn) was wrong in asserting that the taking of water from underground would affect the surface supply. In this case the Company would take it from the new red sandstone, and no effect whatever would be produced upon the surface water. No doubt it would have an effect upon the two streams which had been referred to;

but that was a question which might easily be dealt with in Committee. He thought the wisest thing the House could do was to place the matter in the hands of a Select Committee, and allow them to come to a decision in the usual way. It was contended that the people of Bristol ought to be provided with a supply from Sudbrook. Now, he ventured to affirm what his hon. Friend and Colleague (Mr. L. Fry) had said—that the Committee of the House of Lords objected to the Bill last year on the ground that the supply from Sudbrook was not suitable for the town of Bristol. In the words of the Committee, it would be a dangerous experiment to supply the City of Bristol with water from that source. That, he thought, was a sufficient answer to the statement of his hon. Friend the Member for Somerset. There was, however, another reason, and that was that the Great Western Railway Company would not permit that water to be brought through the Severn Tunnel; and, therefore, the Company would only be able to get it by the expenditure of, at least, £1,000,000, and he need not say that that was utterly out of the question. He knew the valley to which his hon. Friend referred, and he was of opinion that, as a rule, it suffered far more from an over-supply of water than from anything else. It would, therefore, be benefited by the carrying out of this scheme rather than otherwise. On these general grounds he hoped the House would permit the Bill to go before a Committee, and not allow it to be thrown out upon the second reading. If a proposal of that nature were carried, they would convert the House itself into a tribunal for trying all measures of this sort.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, he hoped that, in spite of the hon. Geologist, the House would not support the second reading of this Bill. It should require greater evidence than the speech of the hon. Member as a geologist to convince them that the taking away of the water from this valley would not injure the supply to the inhabitants.

MR. HANDEL COSSHAM said, he had spoken of the springs underground.

MR. BARTLEY said, he was unable to understand, if they took away all the underground water, that the surface water would still remain. It was said that if Parliament refused to give this water they would injure the trade and industry of Bristol. That might or might not be true; but the passing of the Bill would absolutely destroy the whole of the butter and cheese-making industry of a large valley. This was part and parcel of the great question they had before them a week ago—whether they should or should not increase the rights of these Companies. He thought the time had come when Parliament ought to be very jealous as to the character of the privileges it conferred in this respect. He was somewhat interested in this particular Company, because he happened to be a shareholder in the Bristol Water Works, but in spite of that interest he did not think a case had been made out to justify Parliament in passing this Bill. Water could be obtained from other sources, and he thought the hon. Member for Somerset (Mr. Llewellyn) had clearly pointed to at least one of them. His hon. Friend had further shown that the construction of these works would inflict irreparable injury upon an agricultural district without adequately supplying the wants of Bristol. There were other sources to which the Company could go, and as it was a wealthy Company he did not think that there would be any injustice in rejecting the Bill. It was altogether a question of money, and he did not see why the Company should resort to this source of supply and ruin the industry of a valley in order to obtain a cheap supply of water for a city well able to provide for itself in other ways without injury to anyone.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) expressed a hope that the House would not sanction the reference of the Bill to a Select Committee. It would appear that the inhabitants of the Axbridge Valley were the only persons who could oppose the Bill before a Committee as to the water to be taken from their valley, and as the poor villagers in the valley could not protect themselves it was the duty of the House to see that the Company was prevented from interfering with the water supply. The inhabitants, consisting of poor villagers, were too poor to offer an effective opposition to the scheme in Committee; the Rural Sanitary Authority were prohibited by law from spending money in that way, so that practically all methods were closed unless the House interfered on behalf of the persons who were affected by the Bill. It was said by those who supported the Bill that this was the only Company which supplied water to Bristol. That was true, but it must be remembered that they opposed a competitor last year, because they objected to allow any other Company to be there. It was said that the Water Company wanted water, but last year, when they were threatened with competition, their responsible officer gave evidence that the existing water supply was amply sufficient for the purposes of the city. It was said that the Company were going to sell their undertaking to the Corporation of Bristol. That might be true also, and no doubt they were desirous of enhancing the value of what they intended to sell. The hon. Member for Bristol (Mr. L. Fry) said it would cost £1,000,000 to get a supply from Sudbrook; but even if that were so, and that the supply would be a benefit to Bristol, why did the promoters oppose the Company, which last year was ready to spend the required sum? On behalf of the villagers who could not represent themselves, and the Sanitary Authority who had no means of representing themselves, he asked the House to reject the Bill.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.) said, he was anxious, as one of the Members for the City of Bristol, and not from his position in connection with the Board of Trade, to ask the House to listen to him for a few minutes on the subject of this Bill. He could not agree in the correctness of the assumption of the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh). He thought that the hon. Member, if he had listened more carefully to the speech of his hon. Colleague (Mr. L. Fry), would have found that he was wrong in assuming that there was no objection to an alternative supply from the Severn Tunnel. It had been shown that a Committee of the other House which sat last year investigated the proposal to supply that water to the City of Bristol, and reported that it was water that should not be supplied to Bristol —in fact, that it was of a quality that could not be utilized. No other answer had been given in the course of the debate to the demand of Bristol for an increased water supply. It was a demand which could not be properly met in that House by the assertion that it was merely a desire on the part of the Bristol Water Company to increase the value of their property. The Corporation of Bristol last year distinctly recorded their opinion that the growing population of the city required an increased water supply. Further, the hon. Member for Northampton had stated that another reason for rejecting the Bill on the second reading was that the inhabitants of the district from which it was proposed that the water supply should be taken could not be adequately represented before the Committee, owing to the expense it would entail. But his hon. Colleague (Mr. L. Fry) had stated that the opposition was not confined to the poor owners. As a matter of fact, a Duke was at the head of the opposition; and if men in that position could not pay for having their views represented before a Select Committee, he confessed he did not know how it was possible for anyone to have his views represented. How far the wants of this small rural district were affected by the proposals contained in the present Bill could only be discussed and decided by a Select Committee. How to reserve to the district a sufficient supply of water was certainly a question of clauses, and such a supply ought to be secured to it before a gallon of water was taken away. If it was a question of compensation for property of which any individual was deprived, that also was a question that could be measured by the ordinary tribunal; and, under all the circumstances, he asked the House not to reject the second reading of the Bill, which provided, he believed, the only practicable mode of supplying the growing necessities of this great population with pure water.

COLONEL HILL (Bristol, S.) said, he desired very briefly, as the Representative of one of the Divisions of Bristol which consisted very largely of the working classes, and was very poor, to express their views in regard to this Bill. His hon. Friend the Member for Somerset (Mr. Llewellyn) had drawn a very pathetic picture of a rich Company taking away a poor man's water, but it was necessary that the poor people of Bristol, of whom there were a very large number, should have a good and proper supply. He thought the House would take it for granted that there was a want of water in Bristol. The Corporation itself had said so; and it was absurd to put forward the reply of the Secretary of the Company, under the torture of cross-examination by one of the most clever counsel of the day, as a proof that the existing supply was adequate. No doubt the answer of the Secretary applied to the existing supply at the time his evidence was given; but it was proposed by the present Bill to make provision for a supply for some years to come. It was absolutely necessary, so far as the people of Bristol were concerned, that they should be properly supplied with water. The Sudbrook question was entirely put aside by the decision of the Committee in the House of Lords. No hon. Member would desire that Bristol should be supplied with water from an improper source. It was said that the Company were going to take away all the water from a particular valley, but that was a question which could not possibly be entered into in that House. It was a question which must be investigated by a Select Committee, and, if proved before that Committee, care would be taken that the inhabitants of the district were not deprived of their proper supply of water. They were all neighbours of his own, and he should be the last man to come forward in that House and advocate their being deprived of their water supply. If it could be shown that any inconvenience would be suffered, or that the inhabitants would sustain any deprivation, the Water Company would be the first to yield to the evidence and undertake to make proper provision. As had been shown by his hon. Colleague, there was no danger of the case being put improperly before the Committee because nobody was able to appear in opposition to the Bill. Therefore, he hoped the House would read the Bill a second time, and do what it ordinarily did in the case of Private Bills of this kind—namely, send it upstairs to be thoroughly sifted by a Select Committee, who would have evidence before them which the House itself was unable to hear.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck) said, it appeared to him that if hon. Members had come to the consideration of this question with an open mind they could have no hesitation as to what course ought to be taken on the present occasion. The right hon. Baronet the President of the Board of Trade had made no reply whatever to the statement made from the Benches opposite by the hon. and gallant Member for South-East Essex (Major Rasch), on the authority of information which had just reached him by telegram, that the West Gloucestershire Company were prepared to supply Bristol with 3,000,000 gallons of water daily at a charge of 4*d.* per 1,000 gallons. The right hon. Baronet had passed over that statement in silence. Two arguments had been used in the debate, one by the hon. Gentleman who moved the rejection of the Bill, and another by the hon. Member who moved its second reading, which ought to have considerable weight with the House in any Division that was taken on the question. The hon. Member for Somerset said the persons who were chiefly interested in the question were principally small owners and occupiers of land who had sunk wells for themselves, and that their supply of water would in all probability be cut off by the works proposed to be constructed by the Bristol Water Company. On the other hand, the House was told by the hon. Gentleman who moved the second reading of the Bill that the Bristol Water Company would in all probability shortly complete an arrangement with the Corporation of Bristol for the sale of their undertaking. Now, he thought that these were the strongest possible arguments why the House should reject the Bill and refuse the powers asked for. The House had been constantly granting monopolies to local Companies who, when established, used them against the interest and well-being of the community. In this case, if the Bill were passed, when the Company completed the sale of their works to the Corporation, it would be found that they had increased the value of their shares to an enormous amount, and the locality would be saddled with the increased expense. He hoped the House would be careful as to what it did, and personally he had no hesitation in voting with the hon. Member for Somerset for the rejection of the Bill.

MR. WINTERBOTHAM (Gloucester, Cirencester) said, that the House was always anxious to meet the wishes of localities upon matters exclusively concerning themselves. Bristol was one of the largest cities in the Empire, and contained more than 250,000 inhabitants. It asked, through its Representatives, two on that side of the House and two on the other, to give this Bill a proper hearing before a Select Committee. Speaking as a Gloucestershire Member, who lived in the vicinity, and knew that the want of water was badly felt, he thought it would be scarcely decent to refuse the population the right to be heard before a Select Committee. The hon. Member for North Somerset, in the able speech in which he moved the rejection of the Bill, said that the water supply in the villages from which the supply was proposed was at present an endless supply.

Mr. LLEWELLYN begged the hon. Gentleman's pardon. What he had said was that it could be obtained elsewhere.

Mr. WINTERBOTHAM: Very well; but wherever the Company proposed to obtain it they would be certain to be met with local opposition, and in the end they would be able to secure no additional water supply at all. The question was, where was the water to come from? Nobody questioned that Bristol ought to have an additional water supply, but the argument was—"Do not take it from us, but from our neighbours." He thought that was a question which ought to be left to a Select Committee, which was the only competent tribunal to enter into it. He hoped the House would listen to the prayer, not of those 160 children of Queen Elizabeth's School who had been imported into the argument for the rejection of the Bill, but to the prayer of 160,000 poor people who needed this water.

Sir RICHARD PAGET (Somerset, Wells) remarked, that the whole of the 600 Petitioners who had signed the Petition against the Bill were constituents of his. His acquaintance with them was probably not so intimate as that of the hon. Member for North Somerset (Mr. Llewellyn), who resided in the district, but he entirely agreed with the remarks which had fallen from the hon. Member. He wished, however, to say a word in answer to the speech of his right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade. His right hon. Friend passed over the telegram which the hon. Member for North Somerset read to the House, and which only reached him that day, to the effect that the West Gloucester Water Company were in a position to supply any deficiency in the Bristol water supply within a week from the date of the order. If that were not sufficient, there was then the other supply which had been pointed out—namely, the water from the Severn Tunnel. He thought it was clear that there was some misapprehension in the matter. They were told that the water from the Severn Tunnel was not suitable to the wants of the district; but what was the evidence of the City Analyst of Bristol before the Committee of the House of Lords? His statement was that the water was quite good enough and fit for Bristol. Nor did the City Analyst stand alone. The officer of the Board of Health also analyzed the water, and came to the same conclusion. So did six other analysts of distinction, among them being Dr. Wakleyn, and all united in the opinion that the water was thoroughly suitable for the population of Bristol. It was a misfortune that in the present state of the law the Rural Sanitary Authority, who had an important interest in the matter, was unable to spend a single 6*d*. for supporting or opposing any scheme of this kind. But, so far as he was able to ascertain, all of them were distinctly opposed to this Bill. The position of the matter was this. There existed in Somersetshire a happy smiling valley, not of great landowners, but of small owners, who were industriously engaged in agricultural operations, and required a water supply. On the other hand, there was a great and powerful Company, who were anxious to enter the district and take not only the surface water, but whole streams which would disappear for ever. It was a Company which claimed the right to obtain 7 per cent upon the large sum of money they were willing to expend. If ever there was a case in which the House ought to interfere, this was one. He entirely agreed that, as a rule, Bills of this kind ought to go before a Select Committee, and that it required exceptional circumstances to justify the House in taking the matter into its own hands. He also admitted that a great city like Bristol did require to have a water supply thoroughly provided for it, but it had been shown that if the Bill were rejected there were other means by which a certain and regular supply could be secured for Bristol without disturbing this district. The opposition to the Bill came from hundreds of poor men who had subscribed towards the expense small sums ranging from 6*d.* to £1, and under all the circumstances he asked the House to take the exceptional course of rejecting the Bill.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin) said he had listened to the speech of the hon. Member for the Wansbeck Division of Northumberland (Mr. Fenwick) with close attention, and he thought he was not doing the hon. Member an injustice when he said that he had come to the consideration of the question wholly disembarrassed with any previous knowledge of the subject. All the remarks the hon. Member had made were made on the statements he had heard in the course of the discussion. One hon. Member read a telegram he had received that afternoon, and it afforded sufficient material to enable the hon. Member to pronounce a judicial opinion upon the whole matter. Another hon. Member said that this was a contest between two sources of water supply, one of which had already been condemned by a Committee of the House of Lords last year, while some engineer considered it to be a very good source of supply. Those statements were absolutely contradictory of each other, but the hon. Member for the Wansbeck Division was perfectly ready to declare which, in his judgment, was right. The hon. Member had never heard a word before the debate took place about the merits of the case, and yet he was ready now to give a vote expressly on the judgment he had formed. If that was to be the temper in which the House was prepared, in future, to consider Private Bills, he confessed that he looked with terror to the future decisions of the House.

MR. FENWICK said, he hoped the hon. Gentleman would bear in mind that he had said the strongest argument which could be used against the second reading of the Bill was the proposed sale of the Water Company's interest to the Corporation of Bristol.

MR. COURTNEY said, the hon. Member had heard that statement in the course of the debate also. Here was a question involving a great contradiction of evidence. Was the water supply of Bristol ample or not. That was one question. [An hon. MEMBER: No.] Yes; the petitioners declared that it was inadequate. The hon. Member for North Somerset said that it was adequate.

MR. LLEWELLYN said, that he had quoted the evidence of the Secretary of the Company last year before a Committee Upstairs, in which that gentleman stated that not only was the supply sufficient for the present, but that it would be ample for years to come.

MR. COURTNEY said the remark of the hon. Gentleman entirely confirmed his impression; whoever made the statement, the allegation was a question of fact on which there was contradictory evidence. At any rate it was desirable that it should be inquired into by the Authorities of the House, who would decide according to the merits of the evidence. Then again as to the supply. Was the supply of water good or not? Was the House prepared to follow the example of the hon. Member for the Wansbeck Division, and pronounce an opinion upon that disputed fact. Again, as to the effect of the taking away of the water from the valley in which the hon. Member for North Somerset was interested. Would or would it not injure the valley? That was another point in dispute which could be examined upstairs, and which could not be properly dealt with by the House. He had nothing to add to what had been said by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade; but he confessed that he was much surprised by one of the arguments, which came from the opposite side of the House, that this was a contest between the poor and the rich. That argument was afterwards taken up by the hon. Member for the Wansbeck Division. But was it a contest between the poor and the rich? It was a contest legitimately carried on between the consumers of Bristol and the persons who were interested in this valley—at the head of whom stood a noble Duke.

MR. LLEWELLYN said the noble Duke in question did not live within 400 miles of the place. It was not till four weeks after the subscription list was started that the Duke gave a subscription.

Mr. COURTNEY remarked that the noble Duke could not live everywhere, but he owned a farm in the valley, he had petitioned against the Bill, and he would have a right to appear before the Committee in opposition to the Bill. But there was another side to the picture. There were the poor consumers of water in Bristol on the one side, and this smiling, happy valley, as it had been described by the hon. Member for Wells (Sir Richard Paget) opposite. It was said that this was a rich Company, and the hon. Baronet said they proposed to make 7 per cent. on all the capital they expended. It was perfectly true that the Bill gave a maximum of 7 per cent. on the capital; but hon. Members knew that a Bill was passed last Session to provide that all new capital to be supplied in this way should be sold by auction, so that the interest actually realized on the capital expended should be the current interest in the market. The price at which it was sold would be regulated by the commercial value of the Stock. Therefore, the whole of the hon. Member's argument on that point fell to the ground. The real interest was the interest of the consumers of the water, and that was a question which could only be dealt with by a Committee Upstairs. He, therefore, earnestly implored the House not to depart from the well understood practice; but to send the Bill Upstairs to be considered by a Select Committee.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 148; Noes 130: Majority 18.—(Div. List, No. 28.)

Main Question put, and *agreed to*.

Bill read a second time, and *committed*.

QUESTIONS.

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SOUTH KENSINGTON DEPARTMENT—THE HONITON LACE INDUSTRY.

Sir JOHN KENNAWAY (Devon, Honiton) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, If he will print as a Parliamentary Paper the Report of Mr. Alan Cole, sent as a Commissioner from the South Kensington Department to Devonshire, to inquire into the present condition of the Honiton lace industry?

The VICE PRESIDENT (Sir William Hart Dyke) (Kent, Dartford): If my hon. Friend will move for it there will be no objection to lay on the Table and print all that part of Mr. Alan Cole's Report on the Honiton Lace Industry which has a general interest, but omitting the names of individuals, and other matters of a personal or incidental character.

WAR OFFICE—COLONEL BORTON, ADJUTANT OF THE HON. ARTILLERY COMPANY.

Mr. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E. asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he is aware that some of the officers of the Honourable Artillery Company recently presented an Address or Memorial to His Grace the Duke of Portland, the Lieutenant Colonel of the regiment, expressing confidence in Colonel Borton, the Adjutant; whether Colonel Borton himself accompanied these officers when they presented such Address or Memorial; and, whether such a proceeding established a breach of the Queen's Regulations, section 6, sub-section 7, which, amongst other things, provides that—

> "Every officer will therefore be held responsible who shall allow himself to be complimented by officers, non-commissioned officers, or soldiers, who are serving, or who have served, under his command, by means of presents of plate, swords, &c., or by any collective expression of their opinion. Commanding officers should also prohibit the practice of raising subscriptions for the purpose of presenting testimonials in any shape to superiors on quitting the Service, or on being removed from their Corps."

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Section 6 of the Queen's Regulations does not apply to the Honourable Artillery Company. They are specially exempted by a clause in the Volunteer Act of 1863 from the operations of that Act.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—COLONEL TURNER—WARNINGS TO THE PRIESTS OF CLARE CO.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a fact that Colonel Turner, the Divisional Magistrate for the County Clare, has sent police to a number of priests in that county to warn them that proceedings would be taken against them if meetings were held in future in their parishes; whether, in one instance at least, the sergeant of police stated to the priest, that Colonel Turner wished him to say—

> "That if he (the priest) continued to hold meetings, a police hut with an extra force would be placed in the parish, and the district charged with the cost of maintaining them;"

whether he added that the same punishment would be inflicted if reports of meetings were sent to *United Ireland;* and, whether it is a fact, that there has not been an outrage committed in the parish since 1883?

MR. COX (Clare, E.): Before the right hon. and gallant Gentleman answers that Question, I beg leave to ask, whether it is a fact that an extra force of four police was stationed at Sixmile Bridge since the 2nd instant; and whether it is true that the only reason for sending them there was that a public meeting, at which the police were present and took notes, was held at Sixmile Bridge on the 9th of February to listen to an address from Mr. Snelling, an English delegate working-man; and whether any prosecutions or disturbance whatever have arisen, or taken place, in consequence of the holding of that meeting; and, whether it is the intention of the Government to place an extra police tax on every district where English sympathisers with Ireland denounce the policy of the present Government.

MR. SPEAKER: That appears to be a Question that does not arise from the Question on the Paper, nor is it possible to answer that Question without Notice.

MR. COX: Perhaps this concluding sentence may be in Order, and perhaps the right hon. and gallant Gentleman may be able to answer the Question of his own knowledge—whether Colonel Turner said in presence of Mr. Cecil Roche, R.M., to a priest at Sixmile Bridge on the 20th February, that he was ready to testify, whenever called on to do so, that the parish of Sixmile Bridge was perfectly peaceful and free from crime?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet), (who replied): said, I am afraid that, without Notice, I cannot reply as to what Colonel Turner testified to Mr. Cecil Roche, and I would ask the hon. Gentleman to give Notice of the Question. With regard to the Question on the Paper, the Divisional Magistrate referred to replies to the first paragraph in the negative. He states it is the case that in some instances he informed the priests, through the police, that if illegal meetings were held in their parishes, he would be obliged to station extra police there in order to prevent the law from being defied, the cost of which would fall on the people. With reference to paragraph 3, what he conveyed was that in the event of reports appearing in the newspaper named, or other newspapers, of the holding of such illegal meetings he should be forced to conclude the reports to be true, and be compelled to act accordingly.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Am I to understand that Colonel Turner, as a Divisional Magistrate, will accept a report in *United Ireland* as a proof that a meeting has taken place, while his master and superior refuses to accept a report in *United Ireland* as any proof? I beg to ask the right hon. and gallant Gentlemen for an answer to that Question, for it is very important to the parishes in Clare. Is Colonel Turner going to take reports in *United Ireland* as proof that an illegal meeting has taken place, while the Chief Secretary stated that he regarded reports in *United Ireland* as no proof at all?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: Certainly a report in *United Ireland* is not a legal proof, but it is sufficient, in my information, to justify a magistrate in making inquiries; and, in the event of his inquiries proving the report to be correct, to take such action as he may think necessary.

MR. DILLON: That is not what the right hon. and gallant Gentleman stated before. ["Order, order!"] I am entitled to have an answer. I want to know is it a fact that Colonel Turner stated to this priest that, without saying anything about making inquiries first, he would quarter extra police upon this parish if reports appeared in *United Ireland* that meetings had been held.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: I did not state that Colonel Turner stated he would do that without making further inquiries.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): The right hon. and gallant Gentleman has not answered the last paragraph of the Question at all.

Colonel KING-HARMAN: As the parish is not mentioned, and as there are a great many different parishes in that county, it would be rather difficult to answer it.

Mr. COX: I wish to ask, whether it is a fact that a sergeant of police called on Father M'Inerney, of Feackle, and said to him—

> "I have an order from Colonel Turner to call upon you, as the parish priest, and to tell you that if any meeting of the National League be held in the parish in future, or if the proceedings of such meetings be published in the newspapers, extra police will be sent into the parish to be maintained at the expense of the district."

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I have given Colonel Turner's Report, and I have no other information.

THE RIVER THAMES—SANITARY CONDITION—THE NEW HOTEL NEAR WEYBRIDGE.

Mr. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether an hotel is now being built on the eyot near Weybridge Ferry; whether the plans for this hotel, originally submitted to the Chertsey Rural Sanitary Authority, were disapproved because they showed no arrangement for dealing with the sewage; whether the amended plans showed earth closets, with the explanation that all liquid sewage would be distributed on the osier bed, and, of course, eventually find it way into the River; whether this eyot has frequently been under water during the winter, and whether the Thames Conservancy have, either themselves or through their contractors for the new weir at Shepperton, supplied gravel and sand to endeavour to raise the site above the flood level; whether the intake of the Walton Waterworks Company is only about 1,000 yards below the eyot; whether the Chertsey Rural Authority made representations to the Thames Conservators as to the pollution of the River which must necessarily ensue, and only received the reply that every precaution would be taken to endeavour to prevent the sewage reaching the stream; whether the Chertsey Authority forwarded the plans of the hotel to the Local Government Board, who returned them as unable to assist the Authority in dealing with the matter; whether the Conservators have recently prosecuted the same Chertsey Authority for alleged pollution of the River by a small drain falling into a brook nearly two miles from the River, and recovered £50 penalty; and, whether he is able to take any, and, if so, what steps to prevent the Conservators thus permitting the pollution of the River?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Ritchie) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): An hotel is being built on the eyot near Weybridge Ferry. According to the description which accompanied the plans submitted to the Sanitary Authority in January last, all the closets are to be on the earth system and slop water is to be disposed of in the kitchen garden, which, it is stated, will exceed half-an-acre in extent. I am informed by the Thames Conservators that, on the occasion of high floods, the eyot is under water in the winter months. The owner is camp shedding and repairing it, and they have sold to him material raised by the dredges which has been used for this purpose. The statements in the Question as to the communications which have passed between the Chertsey Sanitary Authority, the Thames Conservators, and the Local Government Board, and as to the prosecution of the Chertsey Sanitary Authority for pollution of the river are, I believe, correct. I have not precise information as to the distance of the intake of the Water Company from the eyot; but it is at no great distance. The Local Government Board have themselves no power in this matter. They have, however, received a communication from the Thames Conservators, in which they state that—

> "The Conservators have no jurisdiction over the eyot, or over buildings erected on it. They have powers under their Acts of Parliament to prevent the pollution of the River; but until pollution actually takes place they have no grounds of action. They have instructed their officers to take the greatest precaution to detect the passage of sewage, or other offensive or injurious matter, into the River from the eyot in question; and if pollution takes place the Conservators will enforce the provisions of the Thames Acts."

The Conservators add that buildings are already in existence on several of the Islands of the Thames.

SCOTLAND—THE INDUSTRIAL AND REFORMATORY SCHOOLS BILL.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his promised Bill dealing with Industrial and Reformatory Schools will apply to Scotland; and, whether provision will be made in it for transferring the administration of schools of that kind in Scotland to the Secretary for Scotland?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.) in reply, said, the Bill would apply to Scotland. Industrial and reformatory schools were expressly excluded from the operation of the Act of last Session, which transferred certain powers and duties to the Secretary for Scotland. It would be matter for consideration whether an arrangement so recently made by Parliament should be departed from.

Mr. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) asked, when the Bill would be introduced?

Mr. MATTHEWS replied that he was unable to say.

Mr. PRESTON BRUCE (Fifeshire, W.) inquired, whether industrial schools and reformatories were excluded from the operation of the Act of last Session on the ground that legislation was contemplated on the subject?

Mr. MATTHEWS said, he was not able either to affirm or deny that.

Mr. PRESTON BRUCE said, if the right hon. Gentleman inquired he would find that that was so.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—BOYCOTTING IN FERMANAGH.

Mr. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to the following letter, appearing in *The Fermanagh Impartial Reporter* of 9th February, from Mr. George Ritchie, of Shanroe, in which he says:—

> "My membership in Shanroe L.O.L. has been 15 years in good standing; during this time I was received as a member with courtesy and respect. Lately I had some trouble with a nephew, in reference to a will case; then the members of the above Lodge thought well to Boycott me, the majority of them taking part with a spirit of injustice on the side of my nephew, who was also a member. They sent a message to the shopkeeper where I purchased my provisions, telling him not to sell to me, for if he did he would lose trade by it. Not only this did they accomplish, but as individuals they brought a power to bear on butchers in the neighbourhood, so that it cost me five times the ordinary price to have my pigs killed. The next thing was they Boycotted the sale of my flax, in such a way that I had to pay a Nationalist to sell it in disguise. These illustrations only convey an idea of the many petty ways I have been annoyed at their hands, causing me considerable trouble and inconvenience;"

whether this case of Boycotting will be dealt with under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act; and, whether it has been included in the list of cases lately laid upon the Table of the House?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: Mr. George Ritchie states that the letter in question is a forgery, and that the allegations contained therein are untrue. I understand that a letter from him to that effect will appear in the next issue of the paper.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — MR. D'ARCY, J.P.—IRVINESTOWN PETTY SESSIONS.

Mr. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to the observations of Major D'Arcy, J.P., at the Irvinestown Petty Sessions, on 8th February, 1888, when that gentleman declared that—

> "He would know how to deal with members of the National League if they were brought before him, even if there never was a Coercion Act in force;"

and, whether he will call the attention of the Lord Chancellor to the matter?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I hardly think the observations attributed to Major D'Arcy as a magistrate are of so serious importance as to require the attention of the Lord Chancellor to be called to them.

Mr. W. REDMOND: Arising out of that answer, may I ask whether it is a fact that Major D'Arcy made an application to the magistrates of that district to recommend the Lord Lieutenant to suppress the National League in the locality; and whether, upon the magistrates refusing because of the tranquillity of the district to make such a recommendation, Major D'Arcy, speaking of members of the National League, said—

> "I shall know how to treat these gentlemen when they are brought before me, whether there is a Coercion Act or not;"

and does the right hon. and gallant Gentleman think that that is language likely to inspire the people with respect for the impartiality of the Bench?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: The hon. Gentleman gave no Notice as to this supplementary Question. If any person feels himself so aggrieved by this language, he is at liberty to appeal to the Lord Chancellor.

Mr. W. REDMOND: Might I ask the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, whether it is not the invariable practice in cases like this that the Lord Chancellor's attention is directed to speeches of this kind by the Government; and whether, considering what the Government has already done in certain cases, he is not now leaving the duty of the Government to be performed by private individuals; also, whether he is not aware that unless notice is taken by the Government of this threat, the Nationalists of the district will be very much inclined to get the idea into their heads that Major D'Arcy intends to find them guilty, no matter what they are brought before him for?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I have a much higher respect for the common sense of the Nationalists than to think that.

Mr. W. REDMOND: I expected no better answer.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—APPEALS IN COUNTY MONAGHAN.

Mr. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he can give the total number of appeals entered by landlords in the County of Monaghan, against the recent decisions fixing a fair rent of the Land Sub-Commission, and which are now listed for hearing, with the number in the case of each landlord, and the place and date for hearing such appeals; whether it is true that Dublin has been fixed upon by the Head Commissioner as the place for hearing appeals from the Carrickmacross Union; whether Mr. Horatio Shirley, a landlord in that union, has lodged over 100 such appeals; and, whether arrangements can be made to have these appeals heard within the County Monaghan, and spare the tenents the inconvenience and expense of hearing in Dublin?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Land Commissioners inform me that the total of the number of appeals entered by landlords in the County Monaghan, and remaining to be disposed of, is 403; but they are unable to state the number in the case of each landlord, the Notice of the Question being insufficient for the purpose. It is the case that the appeals on the Shirley Estate are over 100 in number. The place and date for hearing any of the appeals in question have not as yet been determined by the Commissioners. They have already been applied to by the parties residing at Carrickmacross to have the cases heard in a more convenient place than Dublin; and they replied to the effect that they will do what they can to meet the general convenience.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—FAIR RENTS IN NORTH MONAGHAN.

Sir JOSEPH M'KENNA (Monaghan, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he is aware that great anxiety exists in South Monaghan to have the arrear in the hearing of cases to fix fair rents disposed of speedily; and, whether, if it be requisite, he will have an additional Assistant Land Commissioner, or more than one, appointed, as the number of applications to be disposed of exceeds 1,000?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Government are at present in communication with the Land Commissioners with regard to the steps to be taken to expedite the hearing of cases in this district.

POST OFFICE—SMALL PURCHASES OF CONSOLS.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) asked the Postmaster General, When he proposes to lay upon the Table of the House the Regulations for increasing the facilities for the purchase of Consols in small sums through the Post Office; and, whether he will issue a Circular from house to house throughout the country, as was done by Mr. Fawcett on a similar occasion, setting forth in a popular manner the increased facilities for the sale of Consols in small sums through the Post Office, and the new Regulation whereby the maximum deposit in the Post Office Savings Bank of £30 a-year is done away with in the case of depositors investing their savings in Consols through the Post Office?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The Regulations to which the hon. Member refers are in a forward state, and doubtless they will, in the course of a few days, be placed upon the Table of the House. When they have received the sanction of Parliament I shall spare no pains to make the extra facilities for the purchase and sale of Government Stock, through the medium of the Post Office Savings Bank, as widely known as possible.

PRISONS (IRELAND)—REDUCTION OF A PRISON WARDER AT TULLAMORE.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether a prison warder at Tullamore, named Oulahan, has been reduced in rank, thereby suffering a loss of £10 a-year in salary, and has been transferred to a distant prison at his own expense, because some candles were lighted in a window of his residence on the night of Mr. William O'Brien's release; whether this was stated by Oulahan to have been the act of his wife, and whether he was on duty in the prison at the time and until 10 o'clock that night; and, whether, in view of these circumstances, and the severe consequences with which the Prisons Board have visited this warder, he will request them to re-consider their decision in the case?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The facts are substantially as stated in the Question. The reduction of salary, however, was only £7 a-year. The General Prisons Board, having fully considered the case, found that they could not divest the warder of responsibility for the matter. He has been informed that if he is well conducted he may apply after six months for re-instatement. They will not be prepared to re-consider their decision before that period.

WAR OFFICE (SMALL ARMS)—ENFIELD-MARTINI TRIAL RIFLE.

CAPTAIN SELWYN (Cambridge, Wisbeach) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether the Enfield-Martini rifles were manufactured for the purpose of trial; and, if he can state the number made, and the approximate cost of the manufacture and experiments connected with these rifles?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): 1,008 Enfield-Martini rifles were made and issued for trial. The approximate cost per rifle was £3 1*s.* 1*d.*, and of the ammunition £475.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—CO. DOWN SUB-COMMISSION.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) (for Mr. M'CARTAN) (Down, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, considering the large number of originating notices to fix fair rents served on the Land Commission by farmers residing near Castlewellan, in the Unions of Kilkeel, Banbridge, and Downpatrick, and also by farmers residing near Rathfurland, in the Unions of Newry, Kilkeel, and Banbridge, there will be sittings of the County Down Sub-Commission held at Castlewellan and Rathfurland for the accommodation of the farmers living near these towns; whether he can now state at what time sittings of a Sub-Commission will be held at Newtownards and Downpatrick respectively to fix fair rents on the estates of the Marquess of Downshire, the Marquess of Londonderry, and Colonel Forde; and, if he can give the names of the gentlemen who will constitute this Sub-Commission? The hon. Gentleman added: I wish also to ask the right hon. Gentleman, whether it is a fact that the Lord Lieutenant has recently issued a Circular to his tenants, urging them to buy their farms at 20 years' purchase on the old rents; and, whether, this being a fact, he will not expedite the sitting of the Sub-Commission, in order that these tenants may have judicial rents fixed?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I am not aware of any Circular having been recently issued by the Lord Lieutenant on the lines indicated by the hon. Gentleman. The Land Commissioners inform me that a Sub-Commission will commence its sitting for County Down at Banbridge on the 4th of April for cases in the Poor Law Unions of Banbridge and Downpatrick, and will sit to hear cases in Castlewellan during that month. The Sub-Commission will also sit in Rathfurland, if it is found to be more convenient for the parties having cases in Court when the list for that district is issued. There will be a sitting for the Poor Law Union of Newtownards in May next. Some cases on the estates of the Marquess of Downshire and Colonel Forde will appear on the April list; but none on the estate of the Marquess of Londonderry. As already stated, the Assistant Commissioners will be Messrs. Greer, Guiry, Johnston, Mowbray, and O'Callaghan.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—FAIR RENT APPLICATIONS IN CO. DOWN.

Mr. CAREW (Kildare, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he is aware of the cause of the delay in the sitting of a Sub-Commission to hear the fair rent applications served before November last in respect of holdings in the Unions of Naas, Athy, and Baltinglass; whether, considering that the tenants who served notices to fix fair rents before the gale day next after the passing of "The Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1887," are entitled to the reduction on the half-year's rent due on that gale day, and are, notwithstanding, compellable to pay the old rent pending the decision of the Sub-Commission, he will take steps to have the applications from these Unions heard without delay; and, whether he can state on what date, and in what town, the next sitting of a Sub-Commission will be held for these Unions?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Land Commissioners inform me that a Sub-Commission sat to hear cases in the Unions referred to in the month of November last, and that there has been no unusual delay in fixing another sitting. There will probably be a sitting held in County Kildare in June next; but the Commissioners do not appear to have as yet decided upon the place.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—SUB-COMMISSION FOR THE COUNTY OF DUBLIN.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, When the Land Sub-Commission for the County of Dublin will resume its work?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Land Commissioners are at present unable to say when the Sub-Commission will resume its sitting in the County Dublin. The Sub-Commission sat there in December last. They are, of course, obliged, in fixing the sittings of Sub-Commissions, to have regard to the claims of the several counties; and, at the present time, the applications awaiting a hearing in the county in question are less than in other places.

METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS—THE ROYAL COMMISSION.

Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.) (for Mr. Kenyon) (Denbigh, &c.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, When the Royal Commission moved for by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) will be appointed; and, whether the terms of Reference will be such as to include the method of dealing with the sewage of the Metropolis at present adopted by the Metropolitan Board of Works, and the recommendations of the Royal Commission, presided over by Lord Bramwell, which reported in 1884?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): The appointment of this Royal Commission is now under consideration. The method of dealing with the sewage of the Metropolis appears to me to be outside the scope of the inquiry, which would, however, embrace any alleged irregularities in the financial transactions connected with the works which have been undertaken by the Board.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—INQUEST ON AN INFANT CHILD—MISCONDUCT OF A CORONER.

Captain M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord

Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been drawn to the proceedings in the Court of Queen's Bench (Ireland) on Saturday last, relative to an inquest held last August on the body of an infant child of a woman named Ellen Gaffney, who together with her husband were Boycotted through being "land-grabbers," the death of the child being brought about by the inability of the poor woman to nurse it through being unable herself to procure nourishment; whether the Coroner at the inquest in question was advised and supported by leading members of the local branch of the National League; whether he is aware that the Coroner having handed over the depositions, taken on the first day of the inquest, to the Rev. Mr. Bergin, P.P., who lost them, the Coroner proceeded at the adjourned inquest to read to the jury depositions of his own manufacture purporting to be the originals, and that his conduct was characterized by the Lord Chief Justice as "a misprision of his office and gross misconduct;" whether, although it might have been open to the Coroner and jury to return this poor woman for trial on the charge of manslaughter, she was committed for trial on the charge of wilful murder, and remained in gaol under that charge for four months, the verdict to this effect having been drafted by a Mr. White, who had no right whatever to interfere; whether the Lord Chief Justice stated in connection with the whole case that "it was impossible to conceive such misconduct" as that of the Coroner; whether all the members of the Court were clear that the inquisition should be quashed; and, whether any steps can, or will, be taken with the view of relieving the Coroner from the duties of his office?

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I wish to ask, whether it is a fact that the woman Ellen Gaffney was not a married woman; that the child was an illegitimate child; and, whether there is information in the hands of the police affording grounds for believing that the child was deliberately starved to death in order to get rid of the evidence of the illegitimacy?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I cannot say whether the woman is married or not. Gaffney is spoken of as her husband, and I presume that he is so. The evidence, so far as I have seen it, goes to prove that the child died in consequence of the mother being unable to procure the necessaries of life. With regard to the remainder of the Question on the Paper, the facts appear, in the judgment of the Court of Queen's Bench, to be substantially as stated in the Question. The Attorney General for Ireland has the whole case under consideration as to the course he will direct.

MR. DILLON: Do I understand the right hon. and gallant Gentleman to say that Gaffney is the woman's husband?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: I did not say so. What I understand is that the woman was married to a soldier who has been absent for many years, and whether there is any proof as to his death I cannot say.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): The right hon. and gallant Gentleman, having stated that he read the evidence, will be able to affirm or deny that the woman admitted that she was not married to this man?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): May I ask whether the fact that she was married or not would be any justification for the treatment of the child?

[No reply.]

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—CAPTAIN STOKES, DIVISIONAL RESIDENT MAGISTRATE FOR CORK.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Captain Stokes acted as Divisional Resident Magistrate for Cork in place of Captain Plunkett, during the six weeks' vacation allowed the latter in the past year; whether during that period police evidence for the prosecution of Alderman Hooper was collected under his supervision; whether Captain Stokes was one of the two Resident Magistrates who subsequently tried Alderman Hooper; whether the same Captain Stokes adjudicated at the trial of Mr. William O'Brien at Mitchelstown; and subsequently, acting Divisional Resident Magistrate at the trial of Mr. William O'Brien's appeal in the same case at Midleton, jumped on the table of the Court-house, wearing his hat, and with a stick in his hand, ordered Mr. O'Brien's arrest before the warrant for his committal had been made out, though the County Court Judge had stated Mr. O'Brien might leave; and, for what reason was he promoted to the position of temporary Divisional Magistrate after his adjudication in Mr. O'Brien's case at Mitchelstown?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: In reply to the first and third paragraphs of the Question I have to answer in the affirmative. As regards the second paragraph, no police evidence for the prosecution of Alderman Hooper was collected during the period referred to. It is the case that Captain Stokes adjudicated on the trial of Mr. O'Brien at Mitchelstown, and that his appeal before the Recorder at Midleton came on for hearing while Captain Stokes was acting as Divisional Magistrate. I am precluded from entering into the allegations made against Captain Stokes in reference to the proceedings in the Court-house at Midleton, there being, I understand, a civil action pending against Captain Stokes in regard thereto. In the temporary absence of Captain Plunkett through illness it was necessary that his place should be taken by some other Resident Magistrate, and the Government nominated Captain Stokes, on the grounds of competency and public convenience, to act in his stead.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): I wish to ask, whether it is the practice that these Divisional Magistrates should sit on the Bench while cases are being heard under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, as in the case of Colonel Turner, where he sits beside the Resident Magistrates on the Bench, and his private secretary sits with the prosecuting counsel below? Also, whether the Divisional Magistrate is a direct agent of the Castle, and thus both their prosecuting and judicial functions are mixed up?

MR. DILLON: I wish to ask the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, whether it is not a fact that in the case of Alderman Hooper there were 13 charges against him on the occasion when he was tried by Captain Stokes; and whether, as a matter of fact, a number of these charges were not for offences alleged to have been committed during the period which Captain Stokes was in charge of the district as Divisional Magistrate; and whether, that being so, it was not Captain Stokes' duty to report to Dublin Castle on those offences for which he subsequently tried and convicted Alderman Hooper?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: That does not appear upon the Question. If it had I would have had an inquiry on the subject. I think the hon. Member who put the previous Question will see that it does not in any way arise from that which is on the Paper.

AFRICA (WEST COAST)—KING JA JA.

MR. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, What portion of the Treaty of 1884 it was proved that King Ja Ja broke, and what was the evidence brought against, and what was the name of the person who defended, him on his trial; whether the Government will refrain from confirming the sentence passed by Admiral Grubb till an inquiry has been held into the whole circumstances attending the arrest, trial, and conviction of the King; and, whether he will place Papers concerning King Ja Ja's trial upon the Table of the House?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The portion of the Treaty of 1884 which was proved to the satisfaction of the Admiral that Ja Ja had broken was Article V., which is as follows:—

> "The Kings and Chiefs of Opobo hereby engage to assist the British Consular or other officers in the execution of such duties as may be assigned to them; and further, to act upon their advice in matters relating to the administration of justice, the development of the resources of the country, the interests of commerce, or in any other matter relating to peace, order, and good government, and the general progress of civilization."

This Article has been held by successive Ministries to require Ja Ja not to hinder trade with markets outside of his own territories, and he has been warned that he would be held responsible for interference with traders going to such markets. Nevertheless, he has continued to do so. The evidence brought against Ja Ja was chiefly that of the Acting Consul, and of the officer commanding Her Majesty's ship *Royalist.* He was defended by Mr. Edmund

Bannerman, solicitor, of Accra, and was fully heard on his own behalf. Her Majesty's Government consider that no further inquiry is necessary, and that the interests of good order render the removal of Ja Ja expedient. With reference to the last Question of the hon. Member, which he has added today, I will inquire whether any of the Papers can be usefully laid upon the Table.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): May I ask whether King Ja Ja is now in prison?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: He is not in prison at all. He voluntarily left Opobo with the British Consul. He surrendered himself voluntarily. ["Oh, oh!"] I am speaking of facts within my knowledge. He is not in prison. He has a good residence assigned him at Accra, pending his removal to one of the places within his option.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked, whether there was sent from the Foreign Office, on the 10th of November, a letter in the following terms to the Aborigines Protection Society:—

> "I am directed by the Marquess of Salisbury to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 31st ultimo relating to the deportation of King Ja Ja. In reply, I am to state to you that steps have already been taken for securing a full inquiry on the spot on this matter, which investigation would be conducted by the Admiral commanding on the station."

He also wished to know whether, as a matter of fact, this friendly Sovereign of territory in Treaty relations with the British Authorities was not inveigled on board a steamer and brought away from the spot, where the promise was made he should be tried, and conveyed 600 miles along the coast to Accra, and there, on the 28th of November, informed that his trial would be proceeded with at 10 o'clock on the following morning; whether he was told by the Admiral he might produce any witnesses he chose; whether it was not true that it was perfectly impossible for him to adduce any witnesses at all; whether his alleged solicitor, Mr. Bannerman, did not apply to the Admiral for information as to the status of Ja Ja; whether he was not referred by the Admiral to the Administrator of the Gold Coast; and whether this officer did not say that he had no information to afford on the subject?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: Well, Sir, these Questions are somewhat numerous to answer; but it may save the time of the House if I state, as far as I can, what the facts are. I myself received a son of Ja Ja, and others who came with him, at the Foreign Office some months ago. I told them that, on the part of the Secretary of State, the matter would be fully inquired into on the spot by the Admiral on the Station. When the Admiral arrived, Ja Ja had, owing to circumstances which had occurred in the meantime, been removed to Accra; and the Admiral, exercising his full discretion, held the inquiry there. I believe that all the witnesses Ja Ja called were heard. He called three witnesses, and it was as much on his own admissions that the case was substantiated as upon anything else. The facts are as I have stated, that he, being bound to follow the advice of the Consul, obstructed the Consul from establishing free trade in the river, and the traders from trading in the river. I do not understand the Question regarding the Administrator of the Gold Coast. The case was tried with perfect fairness; and I would remind the House that Ja Ja's counsel expressed his full sense of the Admiral's impartiality, and I may say that Ja Ja has just made application to have his son educated in England.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR asked, whether it was a fact that the sentences were not limited to King Ja Ja himself, but extended to every member of his family; and whether it was true, as he had been informed, that no member of his family would ever be allowed to reside in his native land again?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I rise to Order. I wish to ask you, Sir, whether it is in accordance with the Rules of the House that a debate in the form of Question and Answer should be conducted between hon. Members and Ministers across the floor of the House? The Rules require that Notice of a Question shall be given in writing.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: On the point of Order, Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask you whether it be not true that every single Question that I have put has had relation to a matter of fact?

MR. SPEAKER: The only observation which I think it my duty to make is that there is a practice growing up of making counter-statements upon a Question being put, which it is impossible, of course, to deal with, and which practically assume the form of a new Question given without Notice, but which should be the subject of separate Notice on the Paper.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: If in any way I have transgressed the Rules or established practice of the House I am very sorry. I did not intend to do so, and I do not think that I have done so. I limited my Question—I may be allowed to say this in justification and explanation—carefully to those matters which the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs must have been acquainted with, if he were duly informed on the matter.

Mr. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): To close this matter for the present, may I ask whether it is not the fact that King Ja Ja was not informed——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! Sir Robert Fowler.

SOUTH AFRICA—SLAVERY IN BECHUANALAND.

Sir ROBERT FOWLER (London) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether the Government have any information regarding the alleged system of slavery in the Kabkari portion of Bechuanaland; and, if such slavery exists, what steps they intend taking to suppress it?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The facts of the case to which I understand the hon. Baronet to allude are as follows:—A certain portion of the inhabitants of Bechuanaland known as the Bakalahari stand, or rather stood, in an ill-defined relation of dependence and servitude towards the Bechuanas proper. According to native custom these persons can, and do, hold property of their own. Their servitude towards the Bechuanas takes the form partly of actual labour rendered, and partly of tribute paid in kind. They themselves stand in a position towards the Bushmen somewhat similar to that which they occupy towards the Bechuanas. The Secretary of State has laid down the following principles for the guidance of the Local Authorities on the subject:—(1.) Within the British border all these people are in the eye of the law already free men. (2.) He takes for granted, as far as Courts held by magistrates are concerned, that any magistrate would, as a matter of course, refuse to recognize or enforce any claim arising out of the supposed relation of master and slave, and would punish, as an infringement of personal rights, any attempt to exercise forcibly the claims of a master over a supposed slave. (3.) The Local Administrator is to take every opportunity of informing Chiefs and Headmen, who exercise jurisdiction, as to the state of the law, and to warn them against recognizing or enforcing rights which are incompatible with it.

METROPOLITAN POLICE — WILLIAM ROGERS — ASSAULT BY A POLICE CONSTABLE.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the evidence taken before Mr. Partridge, at Westminster Police Court, as to the severe assault by a police constable on Williams Rogers by striking Rogers whilst he stood in custody in the dock at the police station, was ever laid before the Director of Public Prosecutions; and, if not, will he state the reason; will he state the name of the constable; and, whether any legal proceedings whatever have been taken by the Government against that constable for such assault?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): The constable who assaulted William Rogers was Frederick Paulton, who had received great provocation, as Rogers spat at him and was very violent. Paulton, for this misconduct, received a very severe punishment, for he was compelled to leave the Police Force after a service of upwards of nine years. Proceedings for assault must, by law, be taken by or on behalf of the party aggrieved, and not by the Government.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered my Question, as to whether the depositions in that case were laid before the Director of Public Prosecutions?

Mr. MATTHEWS: No; they were not. The occasion never arose.

METROPOLITAN POLICE — ASSAULTS BY POLICE CONSTABLES—RETURNS.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Secretary of State for the

Home Department, If he can state how many cases of complaints of assaults by Metropolitan police constables on the public have been made before magistrates during the past six months; and, whether he will consent to a Return showing the dates, names, and particulars of each such complaint; and showing what, if any, investigation or prosecution took place in consequence of any such complaint?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I have no information as to the number of complaints of assault by police constables made before magistrates, and could only ascertain the facts by inquiry from the magistrates. I have no objection, however, to give a Return of the dates, particulars, and results of all charges of assault made against police constables before magistrates.

MR. BRADLAUGH said, he did not mean mere statements, but charges.

MR. MATTHEWS replied that he had not got them.

METROPOLITAN POLICE—JOHN COLEMAN—CHARGE OF ASSAULT.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, in the case of the man Coleman, alleged to have been assaulted by the police after he was in actual custody in Bow Street Police Station on the 13th of November, he is aware that evidence on oath was given as to this assault before Mr. Vaughan in open Court at Bow Street, the Treasury Solicitor being present; that a summons for the assault was granted by Mr. Vaughan against a police constable on sworn information duly filed in Court; whether, Coleman being a prisoner, an order of the Home Office Authorities was applied for, and granted, for the attendance and examination of Coleman at the hearing in Court; whether, on the return of the summons before Mr. Bridge, magistrate, sitting at Bow Street, half-an-hour's adjournment was asked for by a solicitor's clerk, on the double ground that Coleman's solicitor was then actually speaking in another Court, in another case, and that Coleman himself had not been yet brought up from the prison; whether counsel for the Government opposed such brief adjournment, and whether the summons against the police was thereupon dismissed with £10 costs, without any hearing, and in the actual absence both of Coleman and his attorney; how long knowledge of the sworn informations above referred to has been in the possession of the Solicitors to the Treasury; and, whether such informations have been submitted to the Director of Public Prosecutions or to the Law Officers of the Crown?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): A summons for assault against Police-constable 99 E was granted by Mr. Vaughan on the 3rd of December on the sworn information of John Coleman, duly filed. No evidence on oath was given as to this assault in open Court. The Treasury Solicitor believes that neither he nor anyone representing him was present. The hearing of the summons was adjourned from the 10th to the 17th of December, and an order of the Home Office for the attendance of Coleman on that day was applied for and immediately granted. On the 16th of December, however, Coleman's solicitor applied that this order might be suspended indefinitely, saying that the case would have to be postponed on account of the absence of a witness. No application whatever for adjournment was made to the Court on the 17th of December. The clerk to Coleman's solicitor applied privately, when the magistrate was not in Court, to Mr. Poland, the counsel for the police constable, to consent to an adjournment to a later day. Mr. Poland declined to consent to an adjournment over the 17th, but expressed his willingness to wait for Coleman's counsel. The clerk to Coleman's solicitor then said he should withdraw the summons; and when the magistrate came into Court he so informed the magistrate, without asking for an adjournment. The magistrate, on the application of Mr. Poland, and in the presence of the representative of Coleman's solicitor, dismissed the summons, with 10 guineas cost, saying that the withdrawal of the summons showed there was no justification for its being granted, and that one object for which it was demanded was to prejudice the conduct of the police in the eyes of the public. The information came to the knowledge of the Treasury Solicitor on the 15th of December. It has not been submitted to the Director of Public Prosecutions or to the Law Officers.

Mr. BRADLAUGH offered to furnish the right hon. Gentleman with copies of the sworn depositions testifying that there had been an assault upon Coleman by the police.

EGYPT—RED SEA COAST—FIGHTING NEAR SUAKIN.

Mr. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he will give the House the latest particulars of the recent fighing near Suakin, and of its cause; whether it is the intention of the Government to withdraw the troops of this country from Egypt; and, if he will state how many men have been killed fighting during the last five years in Egypt?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope)(Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I have no later particulars than those already published. With reference to the withdrawal of the British troops from Egypt, I can only refer to the general statements which have been made from time to time by Her Majesty's Government. As the military portion of the Forces engaged generally belong to the Egyptian Army, I am not able to state the casualties which have occurred during the last five years; but, as regards the British Forces, Returns of Casualties were presented to Parliament in 1885 and 1886.

MALTA—THE NEW CONSTITUTION.

Mr. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether he intends to present any Papers to Parliament in connection with the granting of a new Constitution to Malta?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Papers to which the hon. Member alludes were laid on the Table of the House on the 23rd ultimo.

POST OFFICE (SCOTLAND)—ACCELERATION OF THE NORTHERN MAILS.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness) asked the Postmaster General, Whether the contract with the Railway Company expires this summer; and, if so, will he take the opportunity, when making a new contract, of providing for an acceleration of the down London day mail, combined with the Scotch night mail to Wick, Thurso, and Orkney, so as to put the district on a footing of equality with other districts in the North which have been provided with a special train for this mail?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I beg to state than an acceleration of the mail train to Wick to which he refers is not entirely dependent on the cessation or renewal of the contract with the Highland Railway Company. The working of the train can at any time, on a month's notice, be altered under the statutory powers of the Postmaster General. The revenue, however, derived by the Post Office from the County of Caithness does not at present warrant me in taking any course which may add to the expense already incurred in keeping up the posts in those parts.

Dr. CLARK: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the mail train supplies not only Sutherland, but Orkney and Shetland?

Mr. RAIKES: That makes no difference.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—THE NEW CODE OF REGULATIONS.

Mr. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, When the Code of Regulations of the Education Department, which was laid upon the Table of the House on the 20th of February, will be issued to Members?

The VICE PRESIDENT (Sir William Hart Dyke) (Kent, Dartford), in reply, said, the Code of Regulations were in print, and would be issued immediately.

POST OFFICE—RURAL LETTER CARRIERS.

Mr. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether rural letter carriers at 10*s.* per week are entitled to get, free, two uniform suits of clothes every 18 months; and, whether, if that is so, the rural letter carrier running to and from Ballinacarrow, County Sligo, has been so supplied; and, if not, whether he will now be given the usual uniform suit ordered for such servants of the Department?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): Rural postmen belonging to the Establishment and holding permanent appointments receive a suit of ordinary uniform every year, and a lighter suit for summer wear once in two years. Persons employed upon the minor deliveries are frequently not appointed postmen, but are employed by the local postmasters, and they do not necessarily have uniforms, even though their payment is as much as 10*s.* a-week. I understand that this is the case in regard to the Ballinacarrow post.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—FAIR RENTS IN THE ABBEYLEIX UNION.

MR. LALOR (Queen's Co., Leix) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he is aware what number of applications to fix fair rents in the Abbeyleix Union have been served before the 25th of March, 1887; how many before the 29th of September, 1887; and how many before the 1st of November, 1887; how many of these applications have not been heard; and, if the Commissioners have appointed a day for the hearing of these cases not yet decided?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The number of applications to fix fair rents in the Abbeyleix Union served before the 25th of March, 1887, and remaining unheard is 19. The number of applications received from the 25th of March to the 28th of September, 1887, is 200. The number received from the 29th of September to the 22nd of February, 1888—to give the number to the 1st of November only would not be practicable without considerable delay—is 203. The total number of unheard applications on the books for the Abbeyleix Union is thus 422, and one adjournment case partly heard. Of these cases, however, 30 only were received before the passing of the recent Act in August last. The last sitting of a Sub-Commission for this Union was in November last. The next sitting has not yet been fixed.

BANKRUPTCY (SCOTLAND)—CASE OF AULD, A BANKRUPT, OF ABERDEEN.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Lord Advocate, with reference to the case of Auld, the Aberdeen bankrupt, imprisoned for four months for alleged refusal to answer a question regarding a certain sum of money to the satisfaction of the Sheriff Substitute, Whether there is any evidence that the bankrupt has fraudulently concealed any portion of his estate; whether he is aware that Auld is 68 years old, and has repeatedly sworn that his memory has recently been very defective; whether the claims on the estate have been all lodged; and, if so, what is the amount of the admitted claims, and what the amount of funds in the hands of the Trustee to meet them; and, whether it is true that Auld's friends have offered, if necessary, to make up the cost of the bankruptcy proceedings, so as to discharge all claims against him?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The bankrupt in this case, at his first examination, swore that £10 6*s.* were the whole of his assets, and when pressed as to sums of money believed to be his, pleaded defective memory. When again examined, he swore he had made a present of £20 to each of three nephews and a niece, and admitted that he had said he did not remember this before, and that he did so because he did not wish to tell it. His answers were in so many instances uncandid and evasive, that at both examinations he was repeatedly cautioned, and the Sheriff was unable to give any credence to his plea of defective memory. The claims amount to £149 6*s.* 5*d.*, and the funds to £90 19*s.* 10*d.* I answer the last paragraph in the negative.

POST OFFICE—PURCHASE OF THE TELEPHONE COMPANIES.

SIR HENRY TYLER (Great Yarmouth) (for Mr. PROVAND) (Glasgow, Blackfriars, &c.) asked the Postmaster General, If there is at present any scheme for the purchase of the Telephone Companies' interests being considered by the Government; or is there any such scheme in contemplation?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to state that no scheme for the purchase of the Telephone Companies' interests is being considered by the Government, nor is any such scheme in contemplation.

CIVIL SERVICE—POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether all members of the Civil Service are at liberty to belong to Home Rule Organizations or Associations, provided they do not take an active part in public meetings?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The General Rule which I mentioned yesterday as governing the behaviour of Civil servants applies, of course, to all purely political organizations. The Question of the hon. Member, however, is so wide that it may apply to organizations which are opposed to the law of the land; and it must be distinctly understood that while a wide discretion is left to Civil servants as to the Political Organizations to which they may belong in their private capacity, they are not at liberty to join any Association which is illegal.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Is the House and are the Civil Service clerks to understand that every member of the Service is at liberty to belong to any Political Organization provided that that Organization is not illegal, and provided also that they do not take part in public meetings, and that the same Rule exists in all the Departments of the Public Service?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I think, Sir, that I cannot go beyond the answer that I have just given. Rules are laid down by the Heads of the different Departments for the guidance of the Public Service and to prevent scandal in the Public Service. They are, undoubtedly, applicable in all Departments to all, from the highest to the lowest, in the Public Service, and all must be aware whether they are infringing the Rules or not.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Considering the nature of the answer I think I am entititled to ask a further Question. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the Rules laid down by the Heads of the different Departments. I would ask, whether the same Rules are laid down with reference to the different Departments of the Civil Service; or whether there are some Rules for some Departments and others for others?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I believe the Rules in spirit are the same in the different Departments; but they are different in words.

THE CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, When the Civil Service Estimates would be distributed?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I believe Sir, they will be distributed on Saturday.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE) — XIII. — STANDING COMMITTEES.

RESOLUTION. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

[FOURTH NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [29th February].

"That the Resolutions of the House of the 1st December, 1882, relating to the Constitution and Proceedings of Standing Committees for the consideration of Bills relating to Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure, and to Trade, Shipping, and Manufactures, be revived.

"Provided always, That the Committees shall consist of not more than Sixty nor less than Forty Members, subject to the power of addition to the said Committees by the Committee of Selection, as provided by the said Resolution."—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

Main Question again proposed.

Debate *resumed.*

SIR JOHN R. MOWBRAY (Oxford University) said, it was well for the House to see how considerable and fundamental was the change now proposed to be made in the Grand Committees as sanctioned in 1882. It was resolved in 1882 that there should be two Grand Committees, one upon Law and the other upon Trade, and that each should consist of not less than 60 and not more than 80 Members, who were to be nominated by the Committee of Selection. The Committee of Selection, however, had the power to add 15 Members, so that a Grand Committee might consist of 75 or 95. The proposal now made was that the Committee should consist of not more than 60 and not less than 40 Members. It appeared to him that this constitution of the Grand Committees would fail to carry out the object the House had in view, when it sanctioned the establishment of

Grand Committees. The original idea was that these Committees should not be large, but that they should be so large that they should be miniatures of the House itself—perfect representations of the House itself—that they should be presided over by Chairmen specially selected by the Committee of Selection to perform the duties. There was to be a panel of Chairmen not exceeding six, and five Gentlemen of experience were selected. It was now proposed that these Committees should be of very much smaller dimensions. His hon. Friend the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) who, with himself (Sir John Mowbray), took a very active part in the constitution of the Committees in 1882 and 1883, would agree with him when he said that all the Committees then appointed were eminently satisfactory. But the Committee of Selection would experience great difficulty in the formation of Committees of the size now proposed. By a Resolution of the House the Committee of Selection were instructed to have regard to the composition of the House and to the qualifications of the Members selected to serve on the Committees. They were now asked to form a Committee which might be as small as 40, and therefore the House would see the difficulty in which the Committee of Selection would be placed. Take the case of the Grand Committee on Law. Of necessity, the Attorney General, the ex-Attorney General, the Solicitor General and the Lord Advocate, the Attorney General and Solicitor General for Scotland, and the hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who held the same office in the previous Ministry, would have to be chosen as Members of the Committee. Then there were many lawyers from whom they would have to make a selection, and there were the Representatives of the great trading communities, and there were Members of the House who by their individual qualifications ought to be Members of the Committee. The selection would be most invidious; indeed, the task imposed upon the Committee of Selection would be a most onerous one. There was another point he ought to mention, and it was one of very great importance in the working out of these Committees. If a Grand Committee consisted of 67 Members, it would represent one in 10 of the whole House, and the Committee of Selection came to the conclusion originally that a less number than one in 10 would not enable them to thoroughly represent the exact composition of the House and the various Parties in the House. There were Nationalities to be represented, and in the case of trade it was necessary that the different industrial centres in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales should be properly represented on the Committee. If they limited the number of the Committee, they would find the task of selection one almost impossible to discharge.

MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby) said, he had an Amendment to propose which would come before the Proviso at the end of the new Rule. As the Rule stood in 1882 agriculture was not included, and he wished to remedy that omission. He considered it of special importance that this should be done in view of the Railway Rates Bill coming before the Grand Committee. Under the Standing Order of 1882, matters relating to trade, shipping, and manufactures were to be dealt with by the Grand Committee, and he wished the Committee to have regard also to agriculture and fisheries. He was obliged to move the Amendment in the shape of a Proviso in consequence of the form in which the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) presented his proposal, and the Proviso was in these words—

> In Rule 13, line 4, after "revived" insert,—"Provided, that 'Trade' shall include Agricultural and Fishing interests, and that those interests shall be entitled to due consideration in the constitution of such Standing Committee."

Some Members were of opinion that a better plan would be to have a separate Grand Committee to deal with questions relating to agriculture; but if they had such Committee, although all the most prominent Members representing agriculture would be placed on it, probably no Bill of any great importance would be sent to it. To his mind, it would be much better to appoint a number of Members especially connected with agriculture—say, 15—to serve on the Committee on Trade, also a number of Members connected with the fishing industry. Both these industries were greatly interested in the Railway Rates Bill, which would be considered by the grand Committee on Trade; but unless the Proviso he now proposed were adopted, agriculture and fisheries might not receive special attention in the nomination of Members to serve on the Committee.

Amendment proposed,

In line 4, after the word "revived," to insert the words,—"Provided, that 'Trade' shall include Agricultural and Fishing interests, and that those interests shall be entitled to due consideration in the constitution of such Standing Committee."—(*Mr. Heneage.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.) said, he had an Amendment much lower down on the Paper; but as it related exactly to the same subject as the one the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Heneage) had moved, and as it merely provided an alternative plan for giving effect to the wishes of the right hon. Gentleman, he thought it would be convenient to consider the two Amendments together. The Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman would be, he acknowledged, an improvement on the Rule as it stood; but to his mind, a Committee formed of Members who were closely connected with any interest would do better work than a Committee of Members representing conflicting interests. As an illustration of the truth of this, he would point out that the Grand Committee on Law—on which he had had the honour of serving—had been composed of Members representing conflicting interests, and that, therefore its deliberations had been abortive, whilst the deliberations of the other Grand Committee called "the good Committee"—that Committee having been composed of Members connected with trade, had been most successful, and had saved the House a great deal of trouble. If they got a certain number of men interested in a certain subject, and put them on a Committee appointed to deal with that subject, they would agree and would do very good work; but if they took men representing conflicting interests, however much fighting there might be in the Committee, hostilities would be renewed again with the same vigour when the matters in dispute came before the House on Report. He considered that if they had one Committee to do the work of trade and agriculture, they would have a balance of conflicting interests, and the one which proved the weaker would go to the wall. They must bear in mind that there were far more questions raised in the House about trade than agriculture, and that there would be far more Trade Bills referred to the Grand Committee than Agricultural Bills; they must also remember that they had no Minister looking after agriculture, and that agricultural matters were, as a rule, treated in a hap-hazard manner in Parliament. His contention was that if they had some specific machinery for dealing with agricultural subjects, there would be an inducement for doing something for the industry. The country did very little for it at present, compared with what was done for it in the United States, in France, and other countries. He did not see how they could possibly constitute a Grand Committee which would properly attend to both trade and agriculture. As for the Railway Rates Bill, if his proposal were adopted, he should suggest that the measure be referred to the Committee on both Trade and Agriculture. His Amendment was to add, at the end of Rule 13—

"That there be another Grand Committee, similarly constituted, and subject to the same Rules, for the consideration of all Bills relating to Agriculture which may, by order of the House in each case, be committed to it."

If that were accepted, he should vote against the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Great Grimsby, although he thought that proposal would be an improvement on the actual Rule as it stood.

SIR EDWARD BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.) said, he also had given Notice of an Amendment—namely, to add, at the end of the Rule—

"That there be another Grand Committee, similarly constituted, and subject to the same rules, for the consideration of all Bills relating to Agriculture which may, by order of the House in each case, be committed to it."

The reason he had placed this Amendment on the Paper was because he considered the agricultural industry was the greatest in the country, and certainly the most suffering. The tenant farmers did not understand Bills affecting agriculture being sent to a Standing Committee which had also to consider matters affecting commerce, shipping, fisheries, and so on, and he knew their desire was that there should be a Grand Committee to consider agricultural subjects only. He was bound also to say that he had been under the impression that the Bill which was to be introduced constituting an Agricultural Department would be referred to a Standing Committee, and that he considered it indispensable that the measure should come before a Committee composed of Members of both sides of the House who would thoroughly understand the subject. The question of railway rates, which had been referred to by the right hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment (Mr. Heneage), was an important matter. No doubt, there should be a certain number of agriculturists on the Committee by whom that measure would be considered; but, above all, he hoped the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury would hold out some hope to the House that on a future occasion, if there were important Agricultural Bills before the House, he would be in favour of appointing an Agricultural Committee to consider them. If the right hon. Gentleman would do that, the agricultural interests would be satisfied. All he (Sir Edward Birkbeck) would now do was to express the hope that in line 4, before the word "Trade," the right hon. Gentleman would allow the word "Agriculture" to be inserted, so that the Rule would read

> "Standing Committees for the consideration of Bills relating to Law and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure, and to Agriculture, Trade, Shipping, and Manufactures."

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): With regard to the Amendment of my right hon. Friend (Mr. Heneage) embracing the two heads of the Agricultural and Fishing interests, all of us must acknowledge that both of these interests are of enormous importance. But, at the present moment, I do not think we need deal particularly with the fishing interest, because it appears to me that a Bill relating to fishing, supposing this Standing Committee to be reconstituted as a Trade Committee, will be referred to that Committee as a matter of course. That is my impression; therefore, the real question we have before us is the question of agriculture, which probably would not, under the present wording of the Rule, be referred to the Committee on Trade. Now, Sir, looking at the principle of the Amendment of my right hon. Friend, I conceive it to be included in the first few words of the proposal. I am doubtful whether the latter words are necessary or convenient. I thoroughly agree with my right hon. Friend that the Committee on Trade ought to include agricultural and fishing interests. If they are included, then it will follow, under the operation of the Standing Order, that due regard will be had to those interests in the constitution of the Standing Committee; consequently, I think that any further specification such as "those interests shall be entitled to due consideration in the constitution of such Standing Committees," would introduce ambiguity into the rest of the Standing Order. Therefore, I will only consider what I may call the real point before us—whether agriculture will be included within the purview of the Trade Committee. I do not know what the view of Her Majesty's Government may be—I have no authentic information—but before they state it, there is no reason why I should not state the light in which I look at the question. Though agriculture is in many respects distinct from the trading interests, yet they both belong to the great category of industrial interests. When we are told that it is the desire of the tenant farmers to have a separate Standing Committee for the consideration of agricultural matters, I must say I doubt whether persons outside of this House are very competent judges on such a point. It is very much of a practical question for the House itself to consider, rather than one for persons outside, who cannot see very well the practical effect of what they may prefer on abstract grounds. It is not inappropriate to regard that question as it is illustrated by the subjects of great interest that are now pending. Now, there is no subject pending of greater interest to the agricultural classes than that of Railway Rates. It is a subject of extreme complication. It a subject in respect to which the farmers suffer in many instances very considerable hardship. It is impossible to suppose that the Companies will not try to get traffic wherever they can, and will not desire to make the best arrangements for it that can be made. But still there are considerations of the utmost complexity that enter into the arrangements for carrying goods from the place of production to market. Questions connected with the quantities of the goods and the continuity of supply bear upon those arrangements; and it is very often the object of the Companies to get traffic on their lines for long distances; and that has a tendency to bear hardly upon those producers and traders who are nearer to the markets. Now, all these matters will require great consideration in connection with the Railway Rates Bill. We are not now legislating for finality or for eternity. This legislation is, to a certain extent, experimental in its detail; and it is on account of its experimental character that I want to ask myself whether the question could best be dealt with by one Grand Committee or two Grand Committees. The subject of Railway Rates deeply concerns both the agricultural and trading interests. One hon. Member has suggested that the Railway Rates Bill ought to be referred to both Committees; but how can that possibly be done without each Committee having to travel over a great deal of the ground traversed by the other? The Railway Rates Bill is a complex one, and will, we may depend upon it, require all the time and attention which can be conveniently given to it. Most of the matters that will have to be considered in that Bill are in a large degree common to Agriculture and to Trade; and if we are to have a full and effective consideration of them, it is necessary, or at least in the highest degree expedient, that the Committee which has the Bill before it should be able to take into view all the different subjects relating to the traffic which the railways have to carry from the place of production, to market. I believe that, generally, those subjects will be best considered in a Grand Committee which is a Committee both for Trade and for Agriculture. If it should appear that Agriculture might not be sufficiently represented on the Committee—first of all we have great reason to repose confidence in those with whom the selection of the Members will rest; and, in the next place, Agriculture is strong enough in this House to prevent the infliction of any injustice on it in the composition of the Committee. I think that to send the Railway Rates Bill before two Committees would be an awkward and cumbrous arrangement, and one that would tend to delay legislation.

Mr. W. E. Gladstone

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) said, he would not detain the House for more than a moment or two. It had seldom been his good fortune to listen to a speech in the House from the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) with which he more heartily concurred from beginning to end. If they were now about to decide for all time, as to whether or not there should be a Grand Committee on Agriculture, then he thought the question would be open to considerable discussion; but he did not understand that that was so by any means. If in any future Session it was thought desirable or necessary to appoint a Grand Committee specifically to deal with Agricultural questions, he did not think there would be anything in their action to-night to prevent that being done. There could not be a question as to the correctness of the statement of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) that the Railway Rates Bill was probably the measure which, above all others, would interest the Agricultural Party this Session, and that could be discussed by a Joint Committee on Trade and Agriculture. He did not think there was a sufficient number of important Bills affecting Agriculture likely to pass a second reading, so as to render it necessary to ask for a Grand Committee this Session to deal specially with those measures. Therefore, he cordially supported the proposal that Agriculture should be included in the Grand Committee on Trade. That was an arrangement with which at present, at all events, he thought they should rest satisfied.

Mr. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham) said, that representing, as he did, a constituency for the most part agricultural, he trusted that he might be allowed to take part in the discussion. He hoped the House would not assent to the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Great Grimsby. The way in which agricultural affairs had been uniformly treated by both Parties had always been to him a matter of the greatest astonishment. Everybody had always acknowledged the enormous importance of the agricultural interest of the country, and yet it was only recently, after repeated negotiation, that they had obtained the promise of a separate Department and a responsible Minister of Agriculture. He did not think that such treatment was accorded to the agricultural interest in other countries; it certainly was not in the United States and France. What was it they asked for? It had been decided that Grand Committees were to be formed for the discussion of various subjects, and those who represented this most important interest only asked that agricultural matters should be discussed by a Committee composed of Members who were conversant with agriculture. There was a thing in connection with agriculture to marvel at In regard to almost every other pursuit. under the sun some knowlege, training, and experience was deemed to be necessary on the part of those who undertook to deal with it; but that was not the case with agriculture. Almost everybody deemed himself competent to advise the farmer how to farm his land. They were asked to have this Grand Committee composed of very eminent men, no doubt, but not men eminent in agricultural knowledge. The Government appeared to think that the moment a Member was appointed on such a Committee he would be able to deal with the interests of agriculture by intuition. They did not want to deal with agricultural questions men of the Wilkins Micawber kind — this gentleman, as related by Dickens, having, when expecting to leave this country for America, put on a planter's hat and busied himself with casting a critical eye on the cattle that passed, although he could not tell a cow from a horse. They did not want to deal with agricultural questions men who could not distinguish oats from barley, and who told them that jam-making and the growing of "button-holes" was the panacea for all the ills the industry was suffering from. They ought to make a stand and insist on having a Committee in which agricultural affairs would be properly discussed; and he hoped that this justice would not be denied to a depressed and long-suffering interest.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster) said, that the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down (Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen) appeared to be under a misapprehension as to the work which devolved upon Standing Committees. The question they had to consider was how they might constitute the Committee so as to give full expression to the views of hon. Members in different parts of the House. His hon. Friend seemed to fear that if there was not a separate Committee on Agriculture a serious blow would be dealt at that interest all over the Kingdom. Would his hon. Friend say that the Railway Bill was a Bill which solely affected agriculture? It also affected trade, and it would be impossible to refer that Bill to an Agricultural Committee. Indeed, he could hardly conceive any Bill dealing with trade that did not affect agriculture. To confine the Committee, then, to agriculture, would place agriculture at a serious disadvantage; and he believed that if the Government took the course suggested by his hon. Friend they would seriously cripple the power of Agricultural Members to deal with the important interests of their constituents. Then the question arose as to what Bill should be referred to an Agricultural Committee. One thing had been mentioned—the Bill for an Agricultural Department. That was a matter of considerable importance, and ought not to be referred to a Standing Committee at all. The Bill would not be one of any considerable length, and he thought it ought to come before a Committee of the Whole House. He could not give his assent to an Agricultural Committee; but if the circumstances of another year were different and rendered it necessary, then it would be fully open to Parliament to take what action it pleased.

Mr. C. W. GRAY (Essex, Maldon) said, the interests of agriculture should be fairly represented in this House, and he was anxious that, whatever step was taken in connection with these Committees, that agriculture should have perfectly fair play. He did not think that in the past that attention had been paid to agriculture which the importance of the industry demanded, at any rate, in the future. But it appeared to him that their object in reference to this question should be to aim at having these Committees so constituted that the opinions that came down from them to the House should come down with the greatest amount of weight possible; and he fancied that there would be more weight given by the House to opinions which came down from a mixed Committee of Trade and Agriculture than would be given to those which come down from a specific Committee on Agriculture. On that ground and on that line he would support the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury — on the understanding that agriculture was specifically named in the title of the Committee, and that the Agricultural Members would have a perfect right, if they found this plan work badly, to raise the question again on some future period.

VISCOUNT LYMINGTON (Devon, South Molton) said, he agreed it was utterly impossible to dissociate questions of Trade from questions of Agriculture, but there was one point he should like to press upon the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House—namely, that he would reconsider the question of enlarging the number of Members on the Standing Committee. The hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) had appealed to him a few nights ago on the question, and on reflection the right hon. Gentleman would surely agree that it would be impossible within a limit of 40 Members to appoint a Committee which would be thoroughly representative, and would be able to deal practically with these important matters.

MR. SPEAKER: The question of the number of Members forming the Grand Committees will come under consideration on a subsequent part of the Motion.

MR. BROOKFIELD (Sussex, Rye) said, he would point out to some hon. Gentlemen sitting near him the actual state of affairs caused by the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Heneage) and by a subsequent Amendment down in the name of the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Galway (Colonel Nolan). As he understood the matter the Amendment proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Great Grimsby, if adopted, would stultify the subsequent Amendment of the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Galway, and for that reason he opposed the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman. As to the actual merits of the proposal to which they had listened, there seemed to be a remarkable concensus of opinion between the occupants of the two Front Benches in favour of the policy of "masterly inactivity" and postponement. The First Lord of the Treasury had asked the House on various occasions to suggest anything practical to remedy the evil which had fallen upon agriculture, which was reckoned the principal industry of this country. Well he (Mr. Brookfield) ventured to think that a practical suggestion had now been made, and if the Government would accept it, it would be an evidence that they were anxious to do something for agriculture. The agriculturists wished to be allowed to discuss matters affecting their interests through their own Representatives. As to the questions which were likely to come before an Agricultural Committee, he did not understand the discrepancy between the view of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) and the view of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith). The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian having pointed out that the Railway Rates Bill would be a measure of the greatest importance to agricultural constituencies, and holding that for that reason it should be discussed by a thoroughly competent Grand Committee, whereas the First Lord of the Treasury in speaking of another measure —namely, a Bill for the Establishment of a Department of Agriculture, had said that, in his opinion, it would not be right to relegate its consideration to a Grand Committee, but that it should be discussed in Committee of the Whole House. If they looked through the list of measures before the House this Session they would find that there were no less than 14, which were intimately connected with Agriculture. He was loth to detain the House, but he felt compelled to say that they would do well to reject the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Heneage) with a view to the acceptance of that which would take its place upon its being defeated—that was to say, the Amendment of the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Galway. As to the argument that there were not enough Agricultural Members to be found in the House to enable a panel to be struck to serve both on a Grand Committee on Trade and a Grand Committee on Agriculture, that was a state of things for which the remedy rested with Her Majesty's Government, who possessed means to persuade Gentlemen who sat on the Ministerial side of the House and professed to represent agricultural constituencies, to take less frequent holidays and pay closer attention to their Parliamentary duties.

Sir RICHARD PAGET (Somerset, Wells) said, he thought it would be a convenient plan that this question should be altogether decided on the Amendment before the House. They must bear in mind that the alternative to this proposal was one of a very serious character. It was no less than to ask the House to set up alongside of the two Committees proposed by Her Majesty's Government, a third Committee to deal with the question of Agriculture. As practical men they had to ask themselves whether there was any probability at the present time of a sufficient amount of Business arising to justify the appointment of a Committee on Agriculture, and the answer to that question would be found in the determination of what was the extent of the meaning attached to the word "Agriculture." If the view of the hon. Gentleman who had just addressed the House was to be followed, Agriculture would be held to include horses, fish, glebes, Land Bills, Crofters' Bills, agricultural holdings, agricultural labourers, and so on. If they intended the term "Agriculture" to include all legislation upon questions in any way affecting land, then the matter assumed a different aspect, and became of such grave importance that they might well ask that questions of this nature should be handed over to the consideration of a separate Committee. Looking at the term "Agriculture" in its more limited form, and taking the view that had been already placed before the House that the only question of importance which could be rightly sent to the Committee was that of Railway Rates, it was obvious that there could be no ground or reason for supporting the appointment of a distinct Committee on Agriculture. He trusted that those who would have the selection of the hon. Members who would compose the Committee who would have to decide this question of Railway Rates, would not overburden that Committee with railway directors. No doubt these were Gentlemen who had done good work, and whose services were of great value, but it was possible to have too many of them on a Committee of this kind. He understood that the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House accepted the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Great Grimsby?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: Yes; that is so.

Sir RICHARD PAGET: Then with that statement I am perfectly satisfied.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the right hon. Gentleman move the whole of his Amendment?

Mr. HENEAGE: No; only part of it.

The CHAIRMAN of COMMITTEES (Mr. Courtney) (Cornwall, Bodmin) said, he would suggest a slight alteration in the Amendment. He would propose that it should run "Trade shall include Agriculture and Fishing."

Mr. HENEAGE: I am quite willing to accept that alteration.

Original Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed, in line 4, after the word "revived," to add the words "and that Trade shall include Agriculture and Fishing."

Question, "That those words be there added," put, and *agreed to.*

Viscount LYMINGTON said, he would now move the omission of the Proviso laying down that the Committee should consist of not more than 60 nor less than 40 Members. He felt that a new industry had been added to the subjects to be considered by the Committee on Trade. He submitted that the duty of the Committee of Selection was a very onerous and difficult one before, and that the difficulty had now been increased ten-fold. He thought it would be extremely difficult for the Committee of Selection to find within 40, possibly 60, Members Representatives of all the varied interests of the country. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury seemed to think that the duty of a Standing Committee was a duty which ought really to be undertaken by a Committee of the Cabinet itself—that was to say, by a Committee of Gentlemen sitting round a table and considering what the details of a Bill ought to be. He (Viscount Lymington), however, maintained that the duty could not be properly performed by a Committee of 40 or even 60 Members, although, no doubt, the vital details of a Government Bill should be properly considered beforehand by the Cabinet before the measure was submitted to the House. The House had thought fit, and very wisely as he thought, to add the questions of agriculture and fishing to the question of trade, therefore he hoped they would not depart from the old rule and diminish the number of Members of the Standing Committee. Holding these views, he begged to move the omission of the Proviso.

Amendment proposed, in line 5, to leave out from the word "revived" to the end of the Question.—(*Viscount Lymington.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. BARING (London) said, he hoped the Leader of the House would consent to drop this Proviso. He (Mr. Baring) had had experience of the Grand Committee on Trade, and he had never found it too large for easy working or too small for full discussion. If agriculture was to be fairly represented, as he had no doubt it would be, knowing what he did of the Committee of Selection, if the Proviso were retained they would be running very serious risks. There might be, and very probably would be, serious doubts raised whether a Report made by a Committee on a commercial subject of importance, the commercial Members of the Committee numbering, perhaps, not more than 25, would have sufficient weight with the House to carry the Bill when it came from the Committee without re-discussion in Committee of the Whole House. Under the old conditions, there had been sufficient confidence felt in the Committee on Trade to induce the House to accept a Bill when it came back, and to pass it through the Committee stage without re discussion. If, however, questions affecting both agriculture and trade were submitted to so small a Committee, he was afraid the Report of the Committee on matters of commerce (for he would not presume to speak about agriculture) would not have sufficient weight to carry the measure through the House in this way.

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan) also hoped the Proviso would be withdrawn. He feared that the limited Committee proposed would be nothing more nor less than an enlarged Select Committee, and that there would be almost insuperable difficulties in the way of a proper composition of the body. There would be rivalries, heart-burnings, jealousies, and imperfections, and the Report, when presented, would not bear the authority which such a Report ought to bear, and the time of the House would be wasted in re-discussions. He thought the constituencies would be dissatisfied if they found their Members had not opportunities of serving on the Committee. No doubt Members could submit proposals in writing which could be put before the Committee; but the experience of all Gentlemen who had had to do with public affairs was this—that proposals submitted in writing by an absent person met with but scant justice and imperfect hearing.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE said, that the appeal to the Government, led in the first instance by the right hon. Member for the University of Oxford (Sir John Mowbray), had been strongly supported on the Government side of the House. So far as he could gather, very much the same opinion was held on the Opposition side. They would do well to be guided by experience in this matter, unless there were some strong reason for desiring a change. Undoubtedly, the number chosen in 1882 for these Committees might be fairly considered to have worked well; but, at the same time, there might have been some grounds for changing the number if it had been proposed to appoint a great many Standing Committees. But that was not so; and he did not entertain any doubt that the House would be gratified and time would be saved if the right hon. Gentleman would accept the old number, and form the Committees as they were formed in 1882.

MR. W. H. SMITH said, he would at once answer the appeal made to him by the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). He could assure the right hon. Gentleman that he had every wish to meet the views of hon. Members in all parts of the House. This limit of numbers had been proposed under the impression that the House generally was prepared to accept a smaller rather than a larger number of Members. It was thought, moreover, that there might be some difficulty in finding Members to take their places on all the Committees which it would be necessary to appoint that year. The Government had already asked the House to appoint several very important Committees; they had asked for Committees on the Army Estimates, on the Navy Estimates, and on the Revenue Services. There was also another Committee on the Estimates proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler). These would occupy the time of a considerable number of Members of the House. As he was satisfied, however, that it was the view of the House, as a whole, that the limit of numbers should remain as it had been before, he would at once accept the suggestion that had been made, and agree to the Proviso being struck out.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Words *struck out.*

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) said, he proposed to add at the end of Rule 13—

> "That there be added another Standing Committee for the consideration of all Bills relating to Scotland only."

It was impossible for this House to deal adequately with all the details of all the Bills relating to each of the Three Kingdoms. The only way to get rid of the present Parliamentary impotence was to devolve some of their work upon portions of the House specially appointed for the purpose. The experiment made a few years ago was avowedly only an experiment, and it was understood that if it succeeded the principle was to be carried a great deal further. On both sides of the House it was admitted that the experiment had been successful. The Committee on Trade had been eminently successful, and the fact that the success of the Committee on Law had not been so great was due to the fact that the subjects undertaken by the Committee were too large, especially in regard to Scotland. In the Committee Scottish law could not get a fair chance, from the fact that it was entirely different from English law, and the Scottish legal Members were a small minority compared with the English legal Members on the Committee. Therefore, he held strongly that not only must they carry the experiment of Grand Committees a great deal further, but that they should not succeed until they had localized some of these Standing Committees, and made them deal with different parts of the United Kingdom. In regard to this question, he did not wish to go beyond his own country. Some of his Friends might have a great deal to say about Wales and other parts of the country; but he thought it would be admitted that the Scottish case was the strongest of all as a matter of practical politics. They had in Scotland a much greater divergence of law, of institutions, of habits and customs than in any other part of the United Kingdom. Wales claimed a separate nationality; but the laws of Wales had been assimilated to the laws of England. That was not the case in Scotland. There were no less than 18 Bills this Session relating to Scotland only, and almost every one of those Bills was of a specially local character—interesting to Scotsmen alone. Here were a few of them as specimens. The Small Debts (Scotland) Bill, the University of Glasgow (St. Mungo's College) Bill, the Agricultural Labourers' Holidays (Scotland) Bill, the Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) Bill, the Crofters' Holdings Act Amendment Bill, the Education (Scotland) Acts Amendment Bill, the Herring Fishery Bill, the Land Tenure (Scotland) Bill, the Parochial Boards (Scotland) Bill, and the Poinding (Scotland) Bill. These were all peculiarly Scottish subjects, and there was not the least doubt that this Grand Committee, at all events, would have sufficient Business to do, so that there would be no difficulty in that respect. The only Bill that could be referred to the proposed Grand Committees was the Poinding (Scotland) Bill, which might be sent to the Law Committee. Now, what chance would a Bill to amend the law of poinding in Scotland have of being dealt with by English lawyers, who would say — "What on earth does poinding mean?" It seemed that, Scotsman as he was, he had not been pronouncing the word properly, for some of his Friends beside him told him "pinding" was the correct pronunciation. What he wanted was that they should have something like the Scottish Saturdays of previous Sessions. [*Cries of* "No!"] He did not mean that they should sit on Saturdays, but that the Committee he proposed should have something of the character of these sittings, when all Members from other parts of the Kingdom, who were not immediately interested in the subject under discussion, absented themselves. He learned that his hon. Friend the Member for the Dumfries Burghs (Mr. R. T. Reed) had put upon the Paper a Notice to very considerably extend this Motion. If the House felt inclined to carry that addition, he (Sir George Campbell) would be extremely well pleased; but as he was afraid the Party opposite required educating before the adoption of his hon. and learned Friend's suggestion, he preferred the curtailed form of his own Amendment, which he hoped the House would concede.

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the Question as amended, to add the words—"That there be added another Standing Committee for the consideration of all Bills relating to Scotland only."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. DONALD CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.) said, he wished to explain that he supported the Motion, not with any desire to remove the Business of Scotland from the consideration of the House. They heard complaints from Scotland that the voice of Scotland was occasionally overborne in matters in which it had a good right to decide. He might instance such a question as a Bill on the subject of the liquor traffic. They had a Bill last year as to the early closing of public-houses in Scotland, as to which the vast majority of the Scottish Members on both sides voted one way, and yet their view did not prevail on account of the majority, which was made up of English Members. That was a peculiar class of case, because it related to a subject which, by increasing consent, was one which was suitable to be decided by the locality, and even in areas much smaller than the Kingdom of Scotland. It was not upon that ground, therefore, that he supported the Motion of his hon. Friend. He should be content, if they could get consideration of their Scottish Business in this House, to abide the differences of opinion that might arise—to rely upon the deference which English Members would naturally pay to the opinion of Scottish Members on matters which the latter knew best, and which he thought they were entirely disposed to pay—and even if a Scottish measure were partially delayed for a short time, he should have no fear of the voice of the country in a reasonable time making itself heard. The ground upon which he supported this Motion was that the work was not done; and his short experience had convinced him it never would be or could be done. He did not charge that upon any particular Party. He did not charge that on the Government any more than on the Opposition when they were in power. He thought there were great excuses for both Parties. During the Parliament of 1880-85, in which he had not a seat, he was in an office in which it was his duty very closely to observe the progress of Scottish legislation. At the beginning of that Parliament there was a large accumulation of Scottish Business which the Liberal Government was anxious to forward, including measures upon which they knew the hearts of the Scottish people were set, which received the most careful consideration and the approval of the Cabinet, and were then launched in this House. The impression of any novice would have been that the passing of Bills which had received that *imprimatur* was a practical certainty. But the experience of five years had taught them that, however carefully those Bills were prepared, and however anxiously they were looked forward to, instead of their passing being a practical certainty, there was very long odds against any Government Bill relating to Scotland passing at all. The exception to the course which these Bills followed proved the rule; because, for a short length of time, the administration of Scotland was reinforced by the presence of Lord Rosebery at the Home Office. He was Under Secretary for the Home Department, but he was specially charged with the entire control of Scottish Business. He foreshadowed the Scottish Minister, who shortly afterwards was created by Parliament. In 1882, the first Session after Lord Rosebery came to the Home Office, by immense exertions on his part a certain amount of Government time was secured for Scottish Bills, and five, he thought, were passed. Three of these were of great importance—namely, the Entail Act, the Education Endowments Act, and the Fishery Board Act. All these Bills required much discussion, and excited in various quarters strenuous opposition; and if an effort had not been made, which he attributed to that Minister—an effort which had never been made before or since—those Bills could not have received the discussion they required; and though they were now doing most useful work in Scotland, he did not believe that, up to this hour, they would have been passed. There were other Bills of not less importance—the University Bill, for example — which illustrated what he said, an important Bill they had never been able to get through Parliament. He thought with his hon. Friend that that position was partly due to the intrinsic nature of the business itself. It had been of great advantage to Scotland, and to England also, and bore a very favourable comparison to what they saw in another part of the Empire, that the laws and institutions of Scotland were untouched and unimpaired. When the Union with Scotland was completed, they retained their Presbyterian form of Church Government; they retained their laws, and all their administrative institutions, and their system of education. But anyone who had had any contact with the administration of Scottish Business, when it was nominally lodged in the Home Office, would say by experience how excessively difficult it was—almost an impossibility—for English officials who were fully occupied to understand or engage personally in the administration of Scottish Business. And the very same was true of Parliament. The House of Commons had not time to master the details of Scottish Bills, or even the phraseology which would enable it to understand them, or those slight differences which sometimes were all the more puzzling because slight, between the institutions of Scotland and England. That was the price which the House of Commons had to pay for the tranquillity which Scotland enjoyed. Scotland knew that it was allowed to do its Business, if at all, in its own way. Therefore, there had been no discontent or disaffection. What they contended now was, not that the Business was done wrongly, but that it was not done at all. Last year they had an example of how they were to be treated with regard to the conduct of Scottish business. A few Scottish Bills were thrown at their heads at a very late period of the Session, and they were told that if the Scottish Members agreed upon them they would be brought in and allowed to pass. But how could they be expected to agree on the details of Bills on the backstairs of the House? It was on the Floor of the House—by discussion and mutual accommodation—that agreement ought to be arrived at; and if a Bill was rushed through the House in any other way the result was sure to be unsatisfactory. A feeling with regard to that was growing up in Scotland, and he in all earnestness regarded it with some alarm. He thought the neglect that Scottish Business had met with was wrong. It was a thing which admitted of a great deal of excuse; but still it was wrong, and therefore likely to bring evil consequences in its train, and those who are acquainted with Scotland knew that some wild and far-reaching proposals were now becoming current. Scottish Members were questioned as to how the Business of Scotland was done, and it was impossible for them to say that it was properly done, or to give a satisfactory answer. For these three reasons he would support the Amendment of his hon. Friend—in the first place, because Scotch Business was not done; secondly, because there was a reason in the nature of the Business itself why it was not done, and why separate and distinct treatment was necessary; and, thirdly, because there was a feeling growing up in Scotland which required the consideration of that House.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) said, he was sorry his hon. Friend, in bringing forward this Amendment, did not bear in mind the advice of a great American statesman, not to swop horses when crossing a stream. He put down an Amendment on the Paper, and the hon. and learned Member for the Dumfries Burghs (Mr. R. T. Reid) put down an Amendment to it. It was to be presumed that, before putting down these Amendments, they studied the matter, and they brought forward two alternative schemes, which were probably the best that the united wisdom of the Scottish Members could evolve of effecting the purposes they had in view. When one had studied this Amendment, and come to discuss the pros and cons, they found a complete change of front. His hon. Friend (Sir George Campbell) withdrew the Amendment as it stood on the Paper, and he understood that the hon. and learned Member for Dumfries did not intend to propose his.

Mr. R. T. REID (Dumfries, &c.) said, that was a hasty assumption on the part of his hon. Friend.

Dr. CAMERON said, he would assume that he did not and assume that he did, and probably that would cover what would take place. If there were added another Standing Committee for the consideration of all Bills relating to Scotland, in what position should they find themselves? An Order had already been carried constituting Grand Committees on four subjects. Those Grand Committees, according to the Resolution of 1882, would absorb 300 Members, or close on half the House. He presumed they were not going to keep all the Scotch Members out of those Grand Committees. A very considerable number of Members of the House would be occupied on those Committees, and they were given to understand that there would probably be others. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House had told them, a few minutes before, that no Member would serve on two of those Committees. Were the Scottish Members to be debarred from those Committees, or shut out from the discussion of Scottish Business relegated to that Committee? That was the position, assuming the hon. and learned Member for Dumfries did not move his Amendment. But if the hon. and learned Member did move his Amendment, it was proposed that all the Scottish Members should constitute the Scottish Grand Committee, and, therefore, he presumed that none of the Scottish Members would be allowed to sit on any other of the Grand Committees. Was that a state of things which the Scottish Members wished to bring about? The hon. and learned Member proposed that to this Scottish Committee should be relegated all Scottish Bills; that they should pass the second readings of Bills, which would be equivalent to a second reading in the House; that the Bills should then go back to the Committee to go through the Committee stage; and that the Bills should go through without the House having anything to do with them. He could not imagine that that was a scheme which the House would adopt, and if the House did adopt it, it would do nothing to bring the conduct of Scottish Business into accordance with the views of the Scottish people. What was it that made Scottish Business in that House so dissonant from the views of the general public in Scotland? Why, the fact that the Administration was not responsible to Scottish opinion, and could defy the entire vote of the Scottish Members of the House, so long as it had a majority of English Members on the other side. Not merely was that the case, but the Scottish Executive could even defy the opinion of the House of Commons altogether, so long as it had the House of Lords at its back; because it could throw out, in the House of Lords, any Bill it chose, even if the whole of the Scottish opinion in this House and even if the whole opinion of this House were in favour of it. If they were to carry either of the proposals of his hon. Friend they would not be advanced one whit farther. At present they had their Tea Room meetings; but he ventured to say that the result was simply to show how absolutely indifferent the Executive were to the opinion of Scottish Members. He would give them an instance, which he quoted simply because it showed what did occur and what would occur. A Public-House Early Closing Bill came before the House, and a vast majority of the Scottish Members voted in favour of it, so much so that right hon. Gentlemen were obliged to give way and consent to the second reading of the Bill. They had a meeting of the Scottish Members, and the Bill was brought so thoroughly into accord with their views that about 40 or 50 voted for it against half-a-dozen on the other side. Did the Executive yield to that—a matter that involved only Scotland and only a small interest in Scotland? Not at all. They sent it up to the House of Lords and turned it topsy-turvey, and insisted on the Lords' Amendments being adopted. Now, when he had brought in a Bill this year to overset one of the Lords' Amendments, a Member of the Executive blocked the Bill. And what better would they be off with 50 Scottish Committees? So long as they had a Scottish Executive backed up simply by a dozen Scottish Members representing Conservative opinions, so long they must have the administration of Scottish affairs, the carrying of Scottish Bills, dependent upon the views of the Party, which included but a very small minority of the Scottish Representatives. They might have their Grand Committees, or Tea Room meetings; but they could not get beyond that. He thought that what they wanted, while the House remained as it was, was an opportunity of discussion in that House. But what they had to do was to put the Constitution in the melting-pot, as his right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle (Mr. John Morley) had phrased it with regard to Ireland. They wanted to go a little further and apply the same principle which his right hon. Friend had laid down for Ireland to Scotland, and then they would have the matter satisfactorily arranged. But, as for this peddling and pottering through Grand Committees, it was not wanted by the people of Scotland. It would not satisfy them, and it would not cure the evils complained of.

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright) said, he preferred the old traditional mode of managing Scottish Business to that proposed by the Amendment. It had long been the custom to confer with the Lord Advocate as to non-contentious Business, and when they were asked to meet the Secretary for Scotland at Dover House it was for the purpose of facilitating the progress of Scottish Business. When there was really a desire to pass Scottish Business, there was a desire also to make compromises, and when compromises were effected Scottish Business went on as other Business did. He preferred that mode of proceeding to having a Committee upstairs. In a case where difficult matters of principle had to be decided, there would be a great preponderance of opinion one way or the other, and that would give the minority no chance of being heard. The Bill would come back to that House sanctioned by the Committee upstairs, and the House would believe that it embodied the view of the Committee, whereas it would in all probability only be the view of the majority of the Committee. That would give the Committee upstairs exclusive right to control all Scottish affairs; and they might have, for instance, such a Committee sanctioning the views of the Morayshire Farmers' Club, which had recently been shown were not the views of the whole of the farmers of Scotland. The Bill would come back to the House, and English and Irish Members would be coerced into voting for it, on the ground that it had been passed by a Committee of Scottish Members. They would not have substantial justice meted out in this way. Many of these subjects discussed upstairs would never be heard of or be relegated to local tribunals, and they must not forget that if they were really striving to carry out their responsibility for the good of the Empire at large, they must take the opinion, not of 72 Members, but of 672. They wanted a broad and comprehensive grasp; and while he was not going to decry the capacity of Scottish Members, if they added to themselves 600 men and minds they would get a bigger and more comprehensive grasp. He knew there might be disadvantage and delay, and that there were many small grievances that waited to be redressed; but he believed if Scottish Members would put their heads together, that if there was a substantial grievance, no Government could for one instant decline redress. It was when 18 Bills were brought up, the titles of which really required explanation, and many of which would never see daylight, and when they were told they were all matters of such importance that they might be referred to a Committee—that then they doubted the expediency of the tribunal. Underneath all this, as was clearly shown by the speech of the hon. Member for the College Division (Dr. Cameron), there was Home Rule. That was the bottom and basis of the whole concern. Did the people of Scotland want Home Rule? He maintained they did not. The people of Scotland had got on far too well under the Union. They were far too canny, far too well-informed, and far too shrewd to say they wanted separation. But that was what people of the school of the hon. Member for the College Division wanted. He knew very well that what was held out by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), and they knew very well what 99 out of every 100 people thought the right hon. Gentleman meant, when he suggested that if they could only vote Home Rule to Ireland, down would go the Church in Wales, and down would go the Church in Scotland. That was at the bottom of it, and he was there to protest against the assumption being forced upon the House by this very uncanny Amendment.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I will take the liberty of putting aside most of the topics which have filled the speech of the hon. Member who has just sat down. He says he thinks very few Scottish Members would support the proposal of my hon. Friend, after listening to the speech of the hon. Member for Glasgow. Well, I do not think they will be few. I certainly will not be deterred by the speech of the hon. Member from supporting this proposal. I did not gather distinctly from the speech of my hon. Friend that he accepted the proposal. I am under the opposite impression. In my opinion, the speech of the hon. Member afforded additional reason for supporting this proposition. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down says that Home Rule is at the bottom of all this, and something else is at the bottom of Home Rule—the Church in Wales and the Church in Scotland. If the hon. Gentleman only means by that, that the question of the Church in Scotland and the question of the Church in Wales should be decided according to Scottish and to Welsh opinion, with the proposal I entirely concur. Apart from the question whether there is to be a Grand Committee on Scottish Bills or not, I hope the House of Commons will pay deference to the opinion of the Scottish and Welsh Members. But the subject is only darkened and complicated by introducing into this debate matters of the kind upon which, so far as their merits are concerned, there are, no doubt, very sharp differences of opinion. I look upon this as wholly a practical question; and as regards the imputation that it covers a plan of Home Rule, all I can say is, I believe there are many Members on this side of the House who are of opinion that a measure of this kind, if it is temporary and practical, is likely to give satisfaction in Scotland and prevent the introduction of larger demands. That, I think, would be the opinion of the hon. Member for Glasgow, who, I understand, desires a larger measure. Though I do not understand him to reject this, yet undoubtedly his speech was not animated by a spirit of excessive friendliness to this particular Motion, because he wants something larger, and because he has a shrewd suspicion that a moderate proposal of this kind would have a tendency to set aside or indefinitely postpone his own view. That is a good argument why the hon. Gentleman opposite, instead of viewing the speech of the hon. Member for Glasgow as an objection to the proposal, should, on the contrary, be inclined to look upon it in a more favourable aspect. I confess I am one of those who during the eight years of which I have been a Scottish Member—the last capacity in which I am likely to sit in this House—I mean the latest in point of time—I admit that I have felt the greatest difficulty before my assembled constituents in excusing myself and the House of Commons with reference to the handling of Scottish Business. I do not know what the experience of the hon. Member opposite has been; but I have exercised such ingenuity as either nature or practice has given me to make a decent and presentable apology to lay before the people of Scotland for the manner in which their Business—I will not say has been transacted—but let alone. I am at the end of my resources, and I can go no further. I am compelled to confess before them and others that something is wanting. I am very reluctant to be driven into a broad admission—I am by no means convinced—that any great or difficult measure is required for the exigencies of Scotland; but that there is a practical want which has to be supplied I have no doubt whatever. The speeches with which this Amendment was introduced were thoroughly moderate and temperate in their scope, especially, I think, the speech of my hon. Friend who seconded the Amendment. He presented the matter in the most practical shape in which it can be laid before the House. What we have to say, I think, really depends upon, and is justified sufficiently by, a very few practical considerations. The objections which have been taken by the hon. Member for Glasgow turn very much upon details which are not now before us. When you come to the consideration of these details, undoubtedly there are various points which must be carefully weighed. There are two questions of great importance. First, whether all Scottish Members should sit upon the Scottish Standing Committee; and, secondly, whether, if they do, they should sit exclusively. I confess I have considerable doubt whether it would be expedient that all Scottish Members should belong to the Standing Committee, and whether that Committee ought to be composed exclusively of Scottish Members, though I feel that the Scottish representation should be dominant in that Committee, and that it should be in the main a Scottish Committee. These are not the points now before us. The question now before us really is whether there is a practical want which has long been felt, which is now increasingly felt from year to year, and which we ought to make some mild, moderate, and safe effort to supply. In my opinion, there is such a practical want, and it is increasingly felt. I recollect the time when, by means of communication with Scottish Members, it was found practicable, in the state of Business then existing, to get on tolerably well with Scottish Business. It was settled in a great degree and very much by private unofficial communications, which had a great deal of the effect, I admit, of a Grand Committee; but that method is not adequate to the present, and the consequence is that it has fallen very much into disuse. First of all, these wants are continuously growing with the development of social exigencies; and while the wants are growing, the means of meeting them afforded by the state of Business in the House are continually diminishing. The arrears of Business, we all know, get worse and worse. This question has no connection whatever with the conduct of any one Party or Administration. The practical point is this—that Scotland not only has the distinctive marks of a very energetic people, but it is full of peculiar institutions. There is a separate system of jurisprudence, of religious establishment, of Universities, of charities, and of education; and, in point of fact, I must say it is truly marvellous how, owing to the great efforts of this House, things have been kept in a tolerable state down to the present time. But the state of things has really ceased to be tolerable. The want is so great, and has so grown, that I think it is incumbent on this House in prudence to endeavour to make some experiment for the purpose of meeting the want. The House has no time for the despatch of Scottish Business in an adequate manner. That is not the only difficulty. The House has the greatest difficulty in coming at the state of Scottish opinion. What we want to do is this. We do not at all suspect the House of any indifference to the weight of authority which properly belongs to Scottish opinion on a Scotch question; but in order that the House may give that fair and reasonable deference to Scottish opinion—not, as the hon. Member opposite said, that the House should be coerced and bound to vote as the Scottish Members meant to vote upon a Scottish question, but in order that there may be that reasonable deference to Scottish opinion which is fairly due to it—the House requires to have means of knowing what the deliberate Scottish opinion is. At present that opinion has to be gathered haphazard from the debates in the House. What we want is that Scottish opinion shall have the means of testing itself and maturing itself, such as are supplied, such as would be supplied by the meeting of the Scottish Members in a Grand Committee. That being done, we have not a doubt that it would constitute a great practical improvement in the conduct of Scottish Business. My hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, who wishes for something much wider than this proposal, would be glad, I am sure, to see anything in the nature of a practical improvement. Undoubtedly Scottish opinion will be far better matured by this means of bringing together Scottish Members from other parts of the Kingdom to arrive at something like collective and deliberate judgment. The objection has been taken that if Scottish Members serve on a Committee of this kind, they could not also serve upon the Grand Committees which are to be appointed. Now, that may be as regards the individual Member; but there are Scottish Members sufficient to supply a powerful body, say of 40 or 50 men, to sit upon a Grand Committee for Scotland, and to leave in addition to that Committee of predominant Scottish character a residue perfectly adequate to supply the very moderate proportion of Scottish Members that would ever in the ordinary course of things be necessary for the purpose of serving on the Grand Committees. I do not see myself that the question offers any practical difficulties of an insurmountable or even of a serious kind arising in the way of this very moderate proposal. No doubt, there are points to be settled, but they could be easily settled in debate; and I do ask the House to look at this question, not with regard to the ulterior and alarming view which can always be brought to the House for the purpose of disturbing the balance between our affections and our fears, but to ask ourselves the question whether Scotland can or ought to be satisfied with the present arrangements for the conduct of her Business, and whether, if we provide an organ through which the details of that Business can be simplified, can be matured, can be brought into a state for deliberate presentation to the House, that will not constitute a great step towards the attainment of that system, and towards the satisfaction of the reasonable wishes of that country. I know there are Gentlemen near me who will be able abundantly to support by illustrations in the case of particular Bills the great hardship to Scotland in having Scottish measures and Scottish opinion overruled by English opinion, mainly, I am certain, because Scottish opinion cannot, under the present system, be expressed in a form sufficiently deliberate and clear and intelligible. But, with respect to the purpose of my hon. Friend, as expressed in this Amendment, I have not a doubt that the general voice—I may almost say the universal, but certainly general voice—and opinion of Scotland will be strongly in its favour, and I hope the House will give to the proposition a most favourable consideration.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I think the House ought to be grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for bringing back the discussion from the somewhat wide issues raised by the seemed to take in the hands of the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow. I may say that nobody who is a Scotsman, or who has ever occupied the position of Scottish Secretary, is likely at all to underrate the importance of any proposal which is either calculated or intended by its proposers to promote the progress of Scottish Business through this House. Certainly, I am the last person to undervalue that object. But I am not at all sure that the proposal before us is one calculated to carry that object into effect. The right hon. Gentleman, however, is probably not aware of the amount of Scottish Business that under the recent conditions of Parliamentary procedure had really been carried through this House. I have asked the Lord Advocate to give me a list of the Scottish measures passed last Session. That list was as follows:—Criminal Law Procedure Bill, Conveyancing Bill, Publichouses Closing Bill, Public Libraries Consolidation Bill, Lunacy Districts Bill, Crofters' Holdings Amendment Bill, Technical Schools Bill, Trusts Bill, Valuation of Lands Bill, Secretary for Scotland Bill, and Prison Officers' Superannuation Bill. I do not in the least pretend that that list has satisfied, or ought to satisfy, the desires of the people of Scotland; but recollect under what circumstances that not inconsiderable list of measures was passed. It was passed in a Session which was almost entirely and exclusively devoted, not to English or Scottish Business, but to Irish Business; and I ask the House whether, with that list before them, they seriously think that Scottish Business last Session was more neglected than English Business? [An hon. MEMBER: Yes.] Well, I think not. I admit that many measures of importance to both countries which we should have liked to see passed were not passed; but I am not sure that Scotland suffered more seriously than England from the extraordinary block of Business last Session. Another difficulty seems to me to attend this proposal. How are we to define what is exclusively Scottish Business? I admit that you may enumerate Bills which none will deny are exclusively Scottish Business; but whether the particular Bill, the name of which the hon. Member who proposed the Amendment so mispronounced throughout his speech—the Poinding Bill—is purely a matter of Scottish Business, I cannot say, because we must recollect this, that a matter might be one of purely Scottish law, but it might embody principles which, if we accept for Scotland, we can hardly resist in England. In other words, there are questions of purely local interest, and others which are not; and although you may see at the end of a Bill the words, "This Bill shall not apply to England or to Ireland," that does not imply in any way that the matter with which that Bill is concerned is purely a Scottish matter. Therefore, I see in the very definition of Scottish Business a difficulty in the way of accepting the Amendment. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian seems to doubt whether there was any force in the argument urged by the hon. Member for Glasgow with regard to the rights of Scottish Members, as compared with other Members, to sit on Committees other than this Scottish one. Hitherto, the House has gone on the principle that the affairs of any locality are the affairs of the whole House of Commons. If you abolish that principle with regard to Scotland—in other words, if you exclude substantially and practically English or Irish Members from the decision of Scottish matters—then, by a parity of reasoning, you will be bound to exclude substantially Scottish opinion from influencing English or Irish legislation. I confess I am old-fashioned enough to think that that would be a serious matter. There is another most formidable question raised by this proposal. The House is aware of the fact that hitherto it has been the practice of Parliament, when it delegates any Business to a Committee, to see that, so far as the balance of Parties is concerned, the Committee shall be more or less a reflex of the House. Are you going to abandon that principle in your Scottish Business or not? [An hon. MEMBER: Certainly.] Certainly? Then you will observe that that is a new departure of the utmost importance which was not alluded to by the Mover and Seconder of the Amendment, or by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian in the powerful speech in which he supported it. Yet I venture to think that if you are going to have Committees dealing with Scottish or any other affairs which do not accurately reflect the balance of Parties in the House, you will land yourselves in endless difficulties, because the results of the deliberations of these Committees will come down to this House stamped on the face of them with the fact that they have been passed by majorities which may have been Party majorities, and which, if Party majorities, were Party majorities directly opposed to the Party majority in this House. If we could be sure that the questions to be submitted to this hypothetical Scottish Committee would be questions into which Party considerations would not enter, this argument would, of course, fall to the ground; but can any one pretend that you can so carefully sift every measure submitted to the Committee that you will never have this conflict between the Party majority in the Committee and the Party majority in the House, and that you may not put the House in the position of having to reverse by a Party decision that which had been a Party decision in the Committee? Let me make one further observation. The whole speech of the right hon. Gentleman was based on this supposition, that henceforth the Business in this House is to progress as slowly and with as much difficulty as in the last few Sessions. But if that is to be the case, we have surely been labouring night after night on those Rules in vain. I hope and expect the result of the amendment of the Rules will be to facilitate the progress of Business in this House, and that Scotland will amply share the advantages conferred on other parts of the United Kingdom will obtain by the Rules already passed; and I would even point out that there is in the Rule as it at present stands a provision which will enable those Grand Committees to deal effectively with Scottish Business. I assume that on each Grand Committee there will be a considerable number of Scottish Members to deal with the Business of the nation as a whole, but the Committee of Selection have power to add 15 new names, and I presume that whenever a Scottish Bill is under discussion the whole of the 15 appointed by the Committee of Selection would be Scottish Members. You would thus have, without the Amendment of the hon. Member, a Committee, not, indeed, composed exclusively, or even mainly, of Scottish Members, but one in which Scottish Members and Scottish interests would be so largely represented that it would be perfectly possible to deal in an effective manner with any Scottish proposal that came before it. I am bound to say that I do not think that all hon. Gentlemen returned for Scottish constituencies are specially qualified to deal with Scottish subjects. They are not to blame for that, because they are returned by Scottish constituencies as Conservatives or Radicals to represent them on questions of Imperial policy, and to support either a Conservative or a Radical Imperial Government. Therefore, you constantly find men returned who know nothing whatever about Scottish affairs, and who would be quite as much at a loss if they were asked to pronounce the word "poinding" as the hon. Member who made the Motion. For these reasons I hope the House will pause before it assents to a proposal which will undoubtedly have the effect of, for the first time, introducing into our arrangements Committees which do not represent in their constitution the balance of Parties in this House, and which would suggest that it was only the representatives of localities who were capable of adequately dealing with the interests of those localities.

Mr. WHITBREAD (Bedford) said, the proposal under consideration had been received with great fear by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour). He (Mr. Whitbread) ventured to point out to the right hon. Gentleman that if the Motion were carried that would happen which the right hon. Gentleman had suggested might happen. There was nothing more contemplated by the words on the Paper than the formation of one more Grand Committee. That Grand Committee would be constituted just as the other Grand Committees were constituted, and it would be subject to the same Rules, and would form as perfect a miniature of the House, as the two other Committees. If that was the case, the question resolved itself into this—"Shall there be one more Grand Committee, and shall the group of Bills to be referred to that Committee be Scotch Bills?" He thought the proposal was an extremely moderate one. What the Scotch Members asked for was not a purely Scotch Committee—not an exclusively Scotch Committee —[*Cries of* "Oh!" *and* "Yes!"]—but a Committee before which they would be certain Scotch Business would be discussed. Room would be made for the discussion of Scotch Business, which Business was unfortunately unable now to find an opportunity for getting itself considered in the House. He said at once that if the proposal was that this Committee should consist of Scotch Members exclusively, or that on the Committee the Scotch Members should so preponderate in numbers as to overbear all other opinions, it was a bad and dangerous proposal, because it would only tend to accentuate the differences that might possibly exist between the two countries. But the proposal was nothing of the sort. It was that the Committee of Selection should constitute one more Grand Committee, exactly in the same way that they constituted the others. The only proposal at which the Government had a right to feel alarmed was that the group of Bills to be submitted to the Committee should be Scotch Bills. Undoubtedly the Committee of Selection would do what the right hon. Gentleman had just said they would do. If a Scotch Bill were referred to the Grand Committee, they would unquestionably name as the 15 specialists nearly all Scotch Members—Members who were particularly well qualified to deal with the subject before the Committee. But that would really be nothing more than a miniature of the House. It would represent probably just such a House as was drawn together on a Wednesday for the consideration of Scotch Business. There was nothing in that which was contrary to the practice they had hitherto followed. The hon. Gentleman who made the proposal (Sir George Campbell) did not ask to exclude English or Irish or Welsh opinion from the Committee. All he asked was a fair opportunity to get Scotch Business discussed before a Committee which should be competent to discuss it. The proposal seemed to him (Mr. Whitbread) to resolve itself simply into this—the appointment of one more Grand Committee, and the determination of the House to give the Members from Scotland an opportunity of getting their Business considered.

Mr. R. T. REID (Dumfries, &c.) said, those of the Scottish Members who agreed with him would be lacking in frankness and candour if they were to say they accepted the proposal just made by the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread), and were to intimate that they would be satisfied in any way with the constitution of another Grand Committee for Scottish Business, consisting of, perhaps, only seven Scottish Members. The Chief Secretary for Ireland had said that some of the Scottish Members were not more acquainted with Scottish affairs than English or Irish

Members. That might be so; but it was not the case with regard to most of them, and he was satisfied that they all knew what their constituents wished. He should think it a very great calamity if a mixed Committee were to be appointed for the purpose of discussing Scottish Business. The hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) did not seem to have the courage to state what he hinted at. He hinted at Home Rule for Scotland. Those who knew the feelings of Scotsmen, and were in the habit of mixing with them, knew that it was perfectly true that that subject was growing and waxing strong in Scotland. ["No!"] That might not be the opinion of the Lord Advocate. He would not say that the feeling had attained, or would attain necessarily, to any great importance; but there was a very strong feeling growing in Scotland that Scottish Business ought to be conducted with greater expedition than hitherto had been the case. It was because of that feeling, based upon reasons which he regretted exceedingly, that the Home Rule movement, charily and half-heartedly hinted at by the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow rather than defended, had assumed greater proportions. He, however, regarded the Motion before the House in the same light as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, as a purely business proposal, and would not deal with it otherwise than as a means for the management of the Business of the House. It was unfortunately the fact that there were no Scottish Members in the Cabinet, although, of course, there were, as was always to be expected, Scotsmen in it. They might always expect to find them there. But the Secretary for Scotland was not in the Cabinet, and the enormous preponderance of the votes in the House consisted of those of English Members. Was it not reasonable to expect that the English Members would be influenced by their own constituencies, and that, without in the least desiring to do what was unjust to Scotland or to Scottish Members, they would press forward only those measures and questions in which their constituents were particularly interested. This was one of the reasons why Scottish Business was postponed. He wondered that the Chief Secretary for Ireland was not afraid of referring to some Bills passed last year. In August last Session the Leader of the House put down three or four Scottish Bills of great importance, and said, with his usual courtesy, what amounted in effect to this—"Here are those Bills. Now, you Scottish Members can take them if you like them, and if you do not like them, then it will be your responsibility if you do not get them." The result was that they got a Wednesday to discuss them, and that three or four Bills passed into law in the course of an afternoon. There was another tendency. It was this—that, inasmuch as English Members preponderated in number, and had the most complete confidence in the Government of the day, Liberal or Conservative, the Government majority was often used for the purpose of overriding Scottish opinion on purely Scottish questions. He would take the action of the House on the Crofter Question the other night as an instance. Some of the Scottish Members did not represent crofter constituencies; but they were constantly receiving communications with regard to the crofter grievances. The other night there were 36 Scottish Members, as against 11 Scottish Members, who voted for the Amendment to the Address raising the Crofter Question. But they were defeated by the importation of a large number of English Members—he would not say not quite as important as the Scottish Members, but outweighing the Scottish Members—who by three to one were in favour of something strenuous being done in favour of the crofters. The same thing happened with Private Bills from Scotland. Under these circumstances, they asked that some effort should be made for bringing forward Scottish Business by Scottish Members. It could not be done in the House with the amount of Business it had to deal with at present. There was no time to do it, and their time was still further curtailed by the very wise Rule that Business should stop at midnight. The Early Closing Bill last year was only passed by Scottish Members sitting up till 2 and 3 o'clock every morning; but that could not be done now, and the avenues for private Members' Bills had become narrower by the amendment of the Rules of Procedure. He would not for one moment ask for, or care to see, a Committee which did not consist of Members exclusively Scottish Members. He should like to see two conditions attaching to a Grand Committee for Scottish Business—namely, first, that all Scottish Members should sit upon it; and, second, that they should be able to pass, subject always to the control of the House, the second reading, so that, by that means, they should have some chance of bringing their measures before the notice of the House and of the country. Of course, he was well aware that these were only his own opinions. He would remind the House that the criticisms passed upon the Motion standing in his name seemed to have been based on ignorance of his real intentions. The hon. Member for the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright (Mr. Mark Stewart) had said he did not want to meet his brother Scottish Members without the assistance of an equal number of Tories. That amounted to this—that out of 72 Scottish Members there were 60 who were Liberal, or who called themselves Liberal—and for the present argument he would assume that they were Liberal. But if they were to have a Committee dealing with Scottish Business, then the sooner they allowed it to be conducted according to the opinion of Scottish Members the better. He said the same about English Business. When he was an English Member he never thought of voting against the opinions of Scottish Members on Scottish questions; and being now a Scottish Member he would never think of voting against English opinion on any Bill exclusively relating to England. He did not at this stage propose to move the Amendment which stood in his name, because he did not wish to preclude the general discussion upon the much wider Amendment on which he was now speaking. But later on, if it were the wish of the Scottish Members that the matter should be put to the test of a Division, it would be perfectly easy for anyone to move formally that Amendment, in order that the House might divide upon it. He entirely disclaimed the suggestion that they were animated by some desire to get Home Rule under another form; and he equally resented the statements of the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron), that, because they did not choose to accept that which the hon. Member himself had not defined, and had not the courage either to advocate or resist in plain terms, therefore they were to allow the whole of this Parliament to go by without making an attempt to improve Scottish Business, or to do anything to enable them to bring their affairs before the House. There was in Scotland a very earnest desire to see Scottish Business dealt with, and it was simply in that sense that he desired to advocate the proposal of his hon. Friend.

Mr. A. R. D. ELLIOT (Roxburgh) said, his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dumfries (Mr. R. T. Reid) had complained that Scotland was at a considerable disadvantage in consequence of the minority of Scottish Members being frequently outvoted by the majority from other parts of the United Kingdom. But if they were to have an Imperial Parliament, it must necessarily happen that the Imperial majority, as a whole, must frequently differ from the local minority of the different Nationalities sending Representatives. Though that, to a certain extent, might be inconvenient, it was not in any way a grievance that bore on Scotland alone. It weighed on Ireland, on Wales, and even on England itself; for it constantly happened that there was a strong majority of English Members who were outvoted by a majority made up of Members from Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. His hon. and learned Friend told them that when he represented Hereford, though a Scotsman, he thought it his duty to consider, in giving his vote, not the merits of the Scottish cases which came before the House, but how the majority of the Scottish Representatives thought on the matter. That was a view which was opposed by a very great authority indeed. They used to hear that a Member should not consider himself merely the Member for his own constituency, but that he was a Member for the whole country. He asked his hon. and learned Friend how he would deal with such a matter as the disestablishment, or partial disestablishment, or modifying the establishment of the Church of England, which affected England only? It had never yet been supposed that it was not the duty of Scottish Members to form their own opinions upon great Imperial questions of that kind; and he had no doubt that, whatever his hon. and learned Friend had said to-day, he would undoubtedly act as he had the right of acting, and give effect, by his vote in the Lobby, in accordance with what he thought was right and wrong on a purely English question. He (Mr. A. R. D. Elliot) had noticed a tendency on the part of some hon. and right hon. Gentlemen to minimize very much the effect of the proposal now before the House. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) really treated it as if it were very little more than a proposal for referring to a Committee largely composed of Scottish Members Bills mainly interesting to Scotland. If that were all, there would be nothing in it. But it was even now the invariable practice to refer great measures relating to Scotland to Committees on which Scotch Members preponderated. This proposal went a great deal further than that. It was a proposal, in fact, to change altogether the basis upon which their notions as regards Standing Committees had been formed. These Committees had hitherto been formed on a very rational ground. It was determined to divide the measures which came before the House into certain grand leading divisions, which were to be divided according to subjects. Now it was proposed to depart from that rational and proper division, and to divide the Business according to Nationalities. Though the proposal at present before the House was for Scotland only, they had only to glance at the Notice Paper to see that that was not the limit which the friends of this proposal made to themselves. There was on the Paper a similar Motion with reference to Wales. There were on the Paper Amendments suggesting that the stage of second reading should be disposed of by the Standing Committee, and not by the House at large. It was quite clear they must have equality in these matters. Scotland, at the Union, joined England on a footing of equality. He, for his part, believed, however little his hon. Friends who advocated these proposals intended it, that they were aiming a very serious blow at the influence and weight of Scotland in the Imperial Parliament; and he could not understand how an enlightened and patriotic Scotsman could advocate a system which must logically and inevitably lead to a Nationality basis being chosen for the efficient working of legislation in the Imperial Parliament. This proposal meant that all Scottish Bills would be referred to a Committee of Scottish Members, and all English Bills to a Committee of English Members. How, then, were Scottish Members to exercise their due weight on the affairs of the country, when they were excluded from the discussion of English measures? They might talk of local matters as they liked; but, as a matter of fact, England and the English people were something more than local in the constitution of the United Kingdom. The affairs of England were so great and important that, though a particular measure might be confined to England, they could not in their nature be otherwise than Imperial. Take the relations of Church and State. Did anyone say that was a matter about which Scottish politicians and Scottish Members should not concern themselves? If this proposal of his hon. and learned Friend were agreed to, they would have arrived at this preposterous conclusion—that if a measure were brought forward dealing with a purely English subject, such as the Established Church, certain distinguished Members for Scottish constituencies would not be able to take any part either in the second reading or the Committee stages. For instance, they would not like to have the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow (Sir George Trevelyan) unable to enter into the discussion affecting these great interests. A great change had come over Scotland and England in directly opposite directions to the proposal of his hon. and learned Friend. The tendency—and he thought it a very good thing—was, in fact, contrary to the Separatism which these proposals indicated. This modern tendency on the part of Scottish constituencies to elect Englishmen as Members, regardless of their knowledge of Scottish questions, but because of the great part they had taken, in the view of the Scottish electors, in Imperial matters, was growing every day, and Scotchmen and Englishmen were meeting more and more. There was a tendency in the legislation for the two countries to approximate; and, in these circumstances, he said they would be acting very foolishly, perhaps to suit the views of the moment, and perhaps to suit the views of a certain number at the present time, and because they thought their views as to what was best for another country were also correct as to Scotland, if they were to give effect to a proposal of this kind. Whatever might be the reason for the action of his Friends, these views could not be pressed forward in the present position of matters between England and Scotland with success. If they were to be tried they would be found wanting. They would be glad to find Englishmen taking some interest in Scottish matters, and Englishmen, he thought, were very often glad to have Scotchmen mingling in their discussions. For all these reasons, he regretted the general tendency of proposals such as this. He thought the tendency was one that a short time ago never could have prevailed in this country. But things had to a certain extent changed, and they had changed in a great degree from the necessities of Party conflict arising out of issues that might be connected with another country. The hon. and learned Member for North-East Lanark (Mr. D. Crawford) had said that he, for one, would be no party to delegating the affairs of Scotland to some Committee Room upstairs, and that that ought to be done on the floor of the House. That was what he (Mr. A. R. D. Elliot) said too. He thought that remark of the hon. and learned Member had entirely cut away the ground on which he based his whole argument. He maintained that Scottish legislation was not to be shoved aside upstairs, but that it was to be Imperial legislation, on which they expected Englishmen to exercise their own judgment, just as Scotchmen exercised their own judgment on English affairs. If any measure was brought forward which seemed to be contrary to policy and justice, then he submitted it was the duty of Englishmen and Scotchmen and Irishmen to interfere. If that was not done, then he could not see on what theory the Union of the Three Kingdoms rested. He remembered how his right hon. Friends below him had opposed their giving full control to Scotland over such a subject as Scottish Education, and it did seem strange that those very Gentlemen were now advocating proposals which most logically and necessarily extend far beyond what was put forward by the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread), or what was advocated by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. The hon. and learned Member for North-East Lanark had to support his case by proving that Scottish Business was in arrear. It was in arrear. They could not get through their business as they would like; but that was a grievance not special or peculiar to Scotland, and they had to consider how they could further the legislation, not for Scotland only, but for England, and also for Ireland. His hon. and learned Friend had cited the cases of the Scottish University Bill and the Scottish Licensing Bill. He thought the reference of the hon. and learned Member to particular measures was singularly unfortunate. With regard to the Scottish University Bill, no one who knew anything about the matter could deny that the measure failed to pass last Session in consequence of the keen difference among Scottish Members themselves. There was the great difficulty about the Theological Chairs, and he never yet found an English Member who cared anything about the Theological Chairs in the Scottish Universities. The Bill was therefore lost in consequence of the extreme differences of opinion among Scottish Members themselves. The Licensing Bill did pass, however, and was now an Act of Parliament. There was no doubt that it had been found convenient last Session for Scottish Members to meet together and discuss among themselves the details of their measures. He did not admit that Scottish Bills had been lost because there had been no time to discuss the details. He believed Scottish measures had often been lost because Scottish Members disagreed about the second reading. But when the Bills got into Committee, he did not think Scottish Members, as a rule, took long over them. If it was desirable for the Lord Advocate or the Scottish Secretary to call together the Scottish Members, let them do so in the future as they had done in the past. What he objected to was a Standing Order whose basis was the exclusion of Members because they did not come from a particular district. He said that was contrary to the very theory of the Union. If such a system was set up for the different countries in the United Kingdom, then he thoroughly agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour), who pointed out the confusion to which it would lead. A good deal had been said about Scottish opinion in this matter; but he expected Scottish opinion to form itself slowly upon such a question as this. It was a novel one, and it was not to be settled by the mere outcry that Scotsmen had a grievance, and that the Englishmen were not giving them fair play. They had to look into the merits of these proposals and into the real views of the Scottish people. He could not think that the time was approaching when Scottish and English legislation, or when Scottish and English legislators, would be telling off in different directions. He believed the current of the time was entirely against that. He thought they should look below the mere surface of the present movement. They were going contrary to the main leaning of the time, which was towards union, towards amalgamation, towards working together, towards better knowledge of each other. Though he fully admitted that for the moment there might be a movement which seemed to show a tendency in an opposite direction, he could not believe that that was the real current of the time. They should do well to look below the surface, and see that the real union between the Three Kingdoms should be the basis upon which they should wish to found the future.

MR. SHIRESS WILL (Montrose, &c.) said, he must congratulate his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Roxburgh (Mr. A. R. D. Elliot) on the fairness of the arguments he had used from his point of view. His hon. and learned Friend, however, appeared to mistake the issue. He seemed to have got into his mind that the proposition before the House was a proposition pure and simple for Home Rule for Scotland, and he had gone on to point out what he thought was an unnecessary fear—that the position and influence of Scotland would be weakened by the adoption of such a plan. His hon. and learned Friend found what the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary (Mr. A. J. Balfour) had desired to find. The right hon. Gentleman desired to find some measure which could be described as exclusively applicable to Scotland, and his hon. and learned Friend mentioned such a measure in the Universities Bill. That was one of the very things which could better be dealt with by a Grand Committee for Scotland than in any other way. What were the objections to the proposition before the House? The very moderation of the proposition now before the House seemed to make it difficult to answer it. One hon. Member opposite had given as a reason against it that some measure of Local Government for Scotland was impending; but who would contend that such a measure would at all suffice for dealing with the great varieties of questions that were brought up, especially by the private Members representing Scotch constituencies? These questions related to land, fisheries, trade, and 101 different things which could not be dealt with by any measure of County Government. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland stated that that House represented each part of the country. He (Mr. Shiress Will) did not deny it; but what if some parts of the country had been continually complaining, not of late only but for years, that its legislative needs were neglected? He failed to find in his hon. and learned Friend's speech any solution of the difficulty which existed. He was perfectly aware that several measures for Scotland were passed last year. He would be the last person to deny to the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) the fullest credit for what he did last year; but, after all, what did it come to? At the very end of the Session, when Members were leaving town, and when the House was continually sitting to, and oppressed by, late hours, the Technical Education Bill and the Secretary for Scotland Bill were introduced. The good nature of the Scotch Members had to be appealed to in order that they might take what they could get, and if the Lord Advocate had not been met in the most friendly spirit by the Members from Scotland he would have found his efforts at legislation unavailing. Was that state of things to continue? It was common ground in this discussion that the fault did not rest with any man or any Government. The fault lay in the system under which the Business of Scotland was conducted in that House. This matter was not of recent origin. He was perfectly willing to admit that last year's circumstances were exceedingly exceptional, but the grievance had gone on for years. Why had they been asked to appoint Grand Committees but to expedite Business which there might not be time to deal with in the House? Why could not the same principle be applied in the case of Scotland? What was to be done with the 20 private Members' Bills this Session? Were they to meet the same fate as those of last Session? Whatever further discussion might arise on this question, it was premature to treat this Motion as if the House were deciding upon some question of Home Rule for Scotland.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire) said, he would have heartily supported the proposal if he thought it would facilitate the despatch of Scotch Business, but he did not think it would have that result. He recollected a good many meetings of Scottish Members during the last 15 or 16 years, but he could not recall one Bill which had been passed as a result of them, unless it were the Crofters' Act. The difficulty seemed to be that they had too many wise men amongst the Scotch Members; and if they were to have a Committee of Scotch Members, every man would be so determined on his own views that it would be impossible to arrive at any conclusion on a question, and without the assistance of the English Members he did not think much progress would be made with legislation for Scotland. He did not exactly know what was desired. It seemed to be an open question whether English Members should be appointed on the Committee as well as Scottish; but if it were an exclusively Scotch Committee, it might not work so successfully as they desired. There was one Bill this Session which referred exclusively to Scotland, and which he might refer to as an example, and that was the Burgh Police Bill, which the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate hoped to pass this Session. He (Mr. Barclay) recollected some years ago that Bill was referred to what was practically a Scotch Committee, and it was sent down to the House in such a state that it failed to pass. He was bound to say that it was opposed by many of the English Members; but some of the Scotch Members were also opposed to it on general principles, and justly opposed to it, as the Bill stood at that time, and it failed to pass. His hon. Friend seemed to suppose there was only one point of difference with regard to the Scotch University Bill—namely, the theological question; but he could assure him there were several other questions of importance in the Bill on which there were differences of opinion. His conclusion upon the whole matter was that when the Scotch people had made up their minds that a measure should pass, that measure did somehow become law, and he thought there was much reason to hope for an improvement in future. They might expect, now they had amended the Rules of the House, that greater progress would be made with Business. No doubt private Members had great difficulty in getting measures forward; but he was inclined to think in a good many cases that was from want of will on the part of the House rather than from want of time. For instance, there was his (Mr. Barclay's) own private Bill—the Land Tenure Bill for Scotland. The great obstacle to that Bill, he considered, was that the House was not disposed—even the majority of the Scotch Members were not disposed—to pass that measure. With the experience he had had, he was strongly of opinion that such a Committee as that proposed would not do anything substantial to facilitate the progress of Scotch Business, unless, indeed, the House was going to refer the Bills altogether to this Committee. If the House were to refer the second and third readings of Bills to this Committee, he dared say then a good many measures would pass through the House, though they might not prove altogether satisfactory to the people of Scotland. ["Why not?"] Because they would not be in accordance with the opinion of Scotland. He thought, however, it was of the highest importance that legislation for the United Kingdom should proceed upon uniform principles. The great object and aim with regard to the legislation of England and Scotland which had obtained during the time he had been in that House was that the legislation for the two countries should be approximated as much as possible. The enactments of the two countries and the difficulties they had to contend with might, if this proposal were carried, be very much aggravated, and in endeavouring to get rid of one they might encounter other and greater evils. For himself, he confessed he had no very strong opinion on this question, and he should not be indisposed to recommend the Government to make a trial of this Scotch Committee, and he thought one Session would perhaps satisfy a good many Scotch Members of the futility of the proposal. For several Sessions the Scotch Members had been anxious to unite on Scotch legislation; but the result had been, at all the meetings that had been convened for the purpose, that they had not been able to agree on any general course of proceeding. That being his opinion, he thought it would be a sufficient experiment to refer the more important of the Scottish Bills to a large Select Committee, and then they would see what progress was made, and what work a Committee largely composed of Scottish Members would turn out.

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.) said, he was somewhat at a loss to follow the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. Barclay) as to really what conclusion he had arrived at. One conclusion that hon. Gentleman had arrived at he (Mr. Esslemont) was unable to agree with, and that was that there were too many wise men for Scotland. In making that remark the hon. Member spoke for himself, because some of the other hon. Members for Scotland did not claim to be over wise. The very remarks the hon. Member for Forfarshire had made with regard to Scotch Business proved the case for the Committee which was proposed. They were told that last year they had a large number of Scotch measures passed in a very short space of time. He appealed to the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) to say whether many of those measures would have been passed had the right hon. Gentleman not constituted the Scotch Members into a Grand Committee, taken them to a place selected for the purpose, consulted them, ascertained their views, and practically had his measures passed before they were brought into the House. Now, after the experience of last year, and after the experience of the Grand Committee, it was bebeside the question to say this would hinder the Business. But his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Roxburgh (Mr. A. R. D. Elliot) really let the cat out of the bag, when he said if the Scotch Members were to be allowed to have their say with regard to Scotch measures which were to be passed—that is to say—having conceded to Scotland at their discretion what was good for Scotland, then it would be impossible to withhold those measures from other parts of the Kingdom. Now, if these measures were bad measures, why should they expect that other parts of the Kingdom would follow Scotland? If Scotland, by her Representatives, went astray, would the warning which would thereby be given not prevent other parts of the Kingdom from passing bad measures? He admitted that, taking his own personal view, he had favoured something like Home Rule for Scotland, and he had done so because of the impossibility of Scotland receiving that share of consideration that was necessary for Scotch Business in the House. Were he a Representative of an English constituency, he should consider it his duty to do the very utmost he could to obtain the time of the House for legislation affecting England. He did not think the Government majority—namely, five to one, as regarded Scotland were at liberty or could be expected to lay aside legislation affecting England in order that Scotland might have its opportunity, and under existing circumstances it was quite impossible for English Representatives, in the interests of their own constituencies, to allow the Imperial Parliament to discuss such measures at any length; and all the Scotch Members asked was that that House should give them an opportunity of bringing before the House measures having the *imprimatur* of the Scotch Members, and showing that they, at least, considered them to be measures which would be most beneficial to the constituencies they represented. He ventured to say that the feeling that of late had been growing up in Scotland of estrangement to the Imperial Parliament in consequence of the neglect of Scotch Business would be greatly aggravated if this request were refused, and it would greatly strengthen the desire for Home Rule. On the other hand, if this moderate proposal were granted, it would very largely satisfy the Scotch demand for attention to pressing domestic legislation, and would, to a large extent, allay the irritation which at present existed with regard to their relations with the Imperial Parliament. Then there was this point further—the want of opportunity of laying their proposals before Parliament. By the Closure Rules, and by the power now conceded to the Government of taking the whole time of the House if necessary, the Scotch Members were practically excluded from any opportunity of laying their wants before Parliament; but if they had that Committee for Scottish Business, they would have an opportunity they desired of bringing forward and discussing measures affecting Scotland, and bringing them before the House, and he believed that if so, whether they succeeded in carrying them through or not, they would be content. He hoped the House would accede to the very moderate proposal, and agree to the appointment of the Grand Committee now asked for.

Mr. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars, &c.) said, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone)—whom he congratulated on his first appearance in the character of a Scotch Member in the House—had referred to the differences between the institutions of Scotland and England. Those differences, he (Mr. Provand) ventured to say, were far greater than the differences between England and Ireland, or even between the institutions of England and those of the United States. Their methods of education, their Universities, their legal procedure, their Church Establishment in every way differed entirely from those of England; and they all knew that since the Union, England never—notwithstanding her enormous numerical power as compared with Scotland—attempted to force any of her particular ways upon Scotland. They had no reason to complain of that. But they had much reason to complain of the studied neglect of Scottish legislation by the Government. The hon. Member for East Aberdeen (Mr. Esslemont) had spoken of the growing feeling in Scotland respecting Home Rule. Now, he (Mr. Provand) did not think that, up to the present moment, it had taken much root; but, undoubtedly, there was such a feeling against the neglect of Scottish legislation, and if there was one certain way in which the feeling in favour of Home Rule could be increased it would be by rejecting this very moderate and reasonable proposal, which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian had said might be tried, at least, as an experiment. He did not think it would be perfection; but, at the same time, he thought it would do some good. Apart from that, he thought they were entitled to have it tried; and whether the Committee consisted of Scottish Members, or was controlled by Scottish Members, it would be to all intents and purposes a Scottish Committee. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) had read to them a list of Scottish measures passed last Session; but he would point out that even such as they were they would not have been gained had it not been that, in effect, the Scottish Members made themselves what might be called a Grand Committee, and assisted the Government. And in the case in the Technical Education Act, they struck off all their Amendments in order that the Bill might pass. There were 39 Scottish Bills introduced last year, and 12 of them became law. But what were they? The Conveyancing Act was only to correct a blunder in a previous Act; the Crofters' Holdings Amendment Act corrected a blunder in the Act of the previous year; the Lunacy Districts Bill was to correct a blunder in two Acts passed in 1857 and 1877; the Sheriff of Lanarkshire Bill corrected a blunder made by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) himself in appointing Professor Berry to be Sheriff of Lanarkshire; the Prison Officers' Superannuation Bill would probably not affect a score of people in Scotland in as many years; the Trusts Amendment Act, also, would probably affect almost as few. The seventh Bill gave to assessors only a little more work in making their valuations; and the Secretary for Scotland Bill simply enlarged the powers of that Minister. There was not a strong feeling in favour of the last Bill, and he did not think it had made much difference. There was much hope expressed when the Secretaryship for Scotland was created, and there had been much disappointment felt since at the trifling results that had followed. The Technical Schools Bill only passed with the sacrifice of many Amendments; and the same remark applied to the Criminal Procedure Bill, about which, however, he would admit there was some work involved. If the right hon. Gentleman thought that he was entitled to any credit for these Bills, he must candidly tell him that his opinion was different from that of the rest of the Scottish Members. With regard to the Licensed Houses (Earlier Closing) Bill, he desired to point out that the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) had much understated the unanimity of the Scottish Members with respect to this Bill. As a matter of fact, the Scottish Members were as nearly unanimous about it as they could possibly be, because only one Scottish Member voted against it after it came down from the House of Lords, although some of the Conservative Members from Scotland opposed it on the second reading and in one other Division. Yet, with this almost absolute unanimity, the Scottish Members were overruled entirely by English Members, who, to repeat the language which had just been used by the hon. Member for Roxburgh, cared not a button about any measure relating to Scotland, and who passed the Bill in a mutilated form. He believed that the majority of the Scottish Members would support the Amendment of the hon. Member for the Kirkcaldy Burghs, which was a very small measure, and which was only proposed as an experiment. If they failed to make good use of it, let it be dropped; but then it would not be in the power of the Scottish Members to say that the trial of the proposed Committee had been denied to them.

Mr. FINLAY (Inverness, &c.) said, he did not propose to follow the hon. Member for the Blackfriars Division of Glasgow (Mr. Provand) into the somewhat exhaustive review of the Scottish legislation of last Session. The list of measures was enough to fill the heart of any Scottish Member with pride. It was true that the discussion was not so prolonged as upon some ordinary measures which formed the materials for the legislation of last Session; but he thought he was entitled to say that upon the Wednesday devoted to Scottish Business a great many measures passed through Committee with adequate, and yet not with too much, discussion. He did not think that Scottish Members had any reason to look back with either regret or shame upon the performances of that day. With regard to the Amendment standing in the name of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Kirkcaldy Burghs (Sir George Campbell), he must compliment him upon having cast his net so wide. It was stated in such general terms that he very nearly ensnared the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread). But from that calamity they were delivered by the frankness of the hon. and learned Member for the Dumfries Burghs (Mr. R. T. Reid), who explained that the hon. Member had entirely mistaken the purpose of the Amendment, that, owing to the general terms in which it was drawn, he was about to give his vote under a misapprehension, and that the hon. and learned Member for the Dumfries Burghs did not desire to pass the measure with any such help. He (Mr. Finlay) confessed he thought there was very great justice in the remarks of the hon. and learned Member for the Dumfries Burghs, who stated fully and clearly to the House what the Resolution really meant. He (Mr. Finlay) was somewhat perplexed by the number of proposals that had been brought before the House. The original Amendment by the hon. Member for the Kirkcaldy Burghs proposed another Standing Committee "similarly constituted, and subject to the same rules," for the consideration of all Bills relating to Scotland. At the same time the House had presented to them the more drastic and comprehensive measure proposed by the hon. and learned Member for the Dumfries Burghs, according to which all Scottish measures were to be remitted to Scottish Representatives, not only for the purpose of dealing with them in Committee, but also for the purpose of second reading. Then they had presented to their bewildered eyes the amended Amendment by the hon. Member for the Kirkcaldy Burghs, by which he struck out the words "similarly constituted, and subject to the same rules." What did this Amendment of the Amendment mean? Simply that Scottish Business should be remitted to a Grand Committee consisting of Scottish Members only.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: I deny that altogether.

Mr. FINLAY said, he did not pretend to penetrate into the recesses of the hon. Member's mind, and could only deal with the scope of the Amendment and the uses to which it would be put. Although he entirely accepted the personal disclaimer, no one knew what the hon. Member meant but the hon. Member himself. He apprehended that in view of the explanation given by the hon. and learned Member for the Dumfries Burghs the Amendment which stood in his name and the subsequent alteration of the Amendment were extremely ominous circumstances. No better illustration than the Amendment now under discussion could be found of the fact that it was impossible to treat, as confined to any part of the United Kingdom, measures which normally related only to that part. The House was really discussing an Amendment which involved principles of vital importance to the whole of the United Kingdom. The principles on which they had hitherto gone had been that they had one Parliament for the United Kingdom, and that the common sense of all should be brought to bear upon every measure affecting any part. That principle they were now invited to discard in favour of the principle of Nationalities. Reading the Amendment in the light of the commentary supplied by the hon. and learned Member for the Dumfries Burghs——

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL said, he was not responsible for the hon. and learned Gentleman's (Mr. R. T. Reid's) speech or Amendment.

Mr. FINLAY thought that what was said by the hon. and learned Member for the Dumfries Burghs threw a most valuable light on the question the House had really got to discuss. How did the hon. Member for the Kirkcaldy Burghs propose that the Committee should be constituted? Why did he strike out the words "similarly constituted?" Were they struck out at the same time that it was arranged that the hon. and learned Member for the Dumfries Burghs should not bring forward his Amendment? How was his Grand Committee to be constituted? Were those words withdrawn in order to propitiate that section of the supporters of the hon. and learned Member for the Dumfries Burghs who desired that the Grand Committee should consist of Scottish Members only? If they were not withdrawn for that purpose, he did not know why they were withdrawn. Where was this principle to stop? Could any measure of importance be introduced for England, Scotland, Ireland, or Wales, which did not affect the other parts of the United Kingdom? And were they to have for Ireland, Scotland, and Wales separate Grand Committees, consisting of the Representatives of one country only, to deal with measures which were said to affect one part only? And then, no doubt, the question would be raised—"Was poor little England to be left out in the cold?" Were they to have a Grand Committee consisting of Gentlemen for the English constituencies only? ["Hear, hear!"] Hon. Members said "Hear, hear!" With all his heart he protested against this parochial view of the functions of the Imperial Parliament. They were there for the purpose of bringing the views of all parts of the United Kingdom to bear upon every subject of great and national importance which merged in this Assembly. If any subject of purely local importance arose in any Bill relating to any part of the United Kingdom, the greatest attention was naturally paid to the views of the Members representing that part; but he did protest against introducing into that House a principle which was very wide and far-reaching, and which would exclude from the consideration of the details of any measure the opinions of all Members, and against a principle which, if carried to its logical conclusion, would exclude the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), the right hon. Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow (Sir George Trevelyan), and the right hon. Member for the Southern Division of Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), from sitting upon a Grand Committee relating to purely English Bills, upon which they might bring to bear their great official experience.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: No.

Mr. FINLAY said, the hon. Member for the Kirkcaldy Burghs objected to this conclusion; but it was the logical result of the proposal which stood in his name. That might not be in the hon. Member's mind so far as he was aware, but these results were all latent there.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL said, that he would exclude Scotch Members from Business which was purely English as distinguished from Imperial.

Mr. FINLAY said, that his hon. Friend was thus actually shut up to the conclusion that Scotch Members were to have nothing to do with certain Business if it was introduced into the House with regard to England only. This was a *reductio ad absurdum* of his hon. Friend's proposal. He agreed with a great deal that had been said by the hon. and learned Member for North-East Lanark who seconded the Amendment (Mr. D. Crawford), and whose remarks would find an echo in Scotland. There had been a feeling that Scottish Business had not always received the attention it ought to receive; but that was a very different thing from the question whether an appropriate remedy had been found in the Amendment now before the House. He believed that Amendment would not only do no good, but would be actually mischievous in its operation, and he hoped the House would have no hesitation in rejecting it. They were told there was great difficulty in getting Scottish Business brought on; but what would the Amendment do in regard to the question of the second reading of a Bill? Was there latent in this Amendment, as amended, a proposal that the question of the second reading should go to this Grand Committee, which was not to be similarly constituted to the others, and about the constitution of which they knew nothing except that the hon. and learned Member for the Dumfries Burghs said it ought to consist of Scottish Members alone? He (Mr. Finlay) protested against the idea that they should take away from the Imperial Parliament of the United Kingdom the question of the second reading of any measure merely because it related to one part. Why had the hon. and learned Member struck out the words "subject to the same rules?"

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL said, it was to leave that point an open question.

Mr. FINLAY: Exactly. The net had been cast very wide, and all they could see was that it embodied the principle of Nationalities as applied to Grand Committees. [Sir George Campbell: Hear, hear!] For that reason he could not but vote against the Amendment. It could not possibly relieve the House from the pressure of Business in regard to the second reading of Bills. In this connection the hon. Member had entirely failed to explain what possible good his Amendment could do. The Amendment might enable Scottish Members to have a Grand Committee of their own for the purpose of discussing in Committee, measures which had passed the second reading in this House. But he would appeal to the hon. Member, with his great experience of Scottish Business—he did not think he had ever attended a debate on Scottish Business without having the pleasure of hearing the hon. Member—he appealed to him whether on these occasions the House was not pretty well resolved into a Grand Committee of Scottish Members. They had, it was true, a little assistance from their English Friends, and they were glad to have it, because it would be a great pity if Scottish measures were left to be decided solely by the speeches and the votes of Scottish Members. They were all the better of a little corrective from the South. He appealed to the hon. Member whether the grievance was not entirely an imaginary one. The hon. and learned Member for the Dumfries Burghs had made an appeal to the House on behalf of Scottish private Members. He (Mr. Finlay) had the greatest sympathy for Scottish private Members, for he was one of them himself, and he would be very glad of any change in the Rules which would give them more time. But had the English Members no difficulty in getting on with measures in which they were interested? And what good would this proposal do in the way of enabling them to get on with measures in Committee? He had stated his reasons for believing the Amendment would not only do no good, but would do a great deal of mischief; and he would not sit down without indicating the direction in which he believed the real remedy lay. He did not believe Scottish Business would ever be properly attended to in this House until they had a Scottish Minister who had a seat in the Cabinet.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee) said, that his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Inverness (Mr. Finlay) had said and done a great deal to reconcile him to the Amendment of his hon. Friend the Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell). Because the gist of his speech was to show that there was latent in his hon. Friend's Motion the germs of the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for Dumfries (Mr. R. T. Reid). The Motion he favoured was that of the hon. and learned Member for Dumfries, and the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Inverness reconciled him to vote for the Amendment originally proposed by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy. The hon. and learned Member for Inverness seemed to forget that even under the Motion of the hon. and learned Member for Dumfries this House would still retain complete control over every detail of any Bill that might be submitted to the Scottish Committee when that Bill had passed the Committee and been reported to the House. He stood as firmly as the hon. and learned Member for Inverness, or as anyone else, for the supreme sovereignty of that House in all matters of legislation, and he said that principle was perfectly consistent with the terms of the Amendment. The hon. and learned Member (Mr. Finlay) had entered a protest against what he called the introduction of a new principle into that House; but every argument upon which this proposal had been supported was that this was no new proposal, but that it was already carried out in the practice of the House. They heard every day that Scotch Members were allowed to control the Business of Scotland. Now, he hoped one of the results of that debate would be to remove a delusion, which had been very widespread and very prevalent, as to the extent to which Scottish Members were allowed to control the Business of Scotland. He had listened with amazement to English and Irish Members who had protested that if Ireland could only be treated as Scotland was, there would not be much difficulty about Irish questions. He had been amazed to see that the President of the Board of Trade (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) had propounded that very remedy for Irish grievances. After that debate, and what had been said by his Colleagues, it must be apparent to English Members that this was an entire delusion. He protested, for his own part, that it was the very reverse of the truth. They had the illustrious authority of the senior Member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright) that Scotland was the best regulated portion of the United Kingdom, and that her reward for her good conduct was the systematic and continued neglect of her Business. [Sir EDWARD CLARKE: No, no! *and Opposition Cheers.*] He accepted the verdict of his Colleagues rather than that of the English Solicitor General, who appeared to dissent from his statement. Scottish Business, when it had been taken up, had often been disposed of in a sense contrary to the opinions and wishes of Scotsmen. He would venture to say that Scotland in that House had often been like the respectable elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son. It had been a law-abiding country, and it had been obliged to see the fatted calf killed for others; and it was no wonder that Scottish Members grumbled when that spectacle was presented to them. He had before observed that he was not much in love with the principle of devolution. It was exposed to great dangers, as he had seen in the case of the United States, where Parliamentary life was destroyed by it both in Congress and in every Legislature in the Union. Therefore he did not support this proposal because it added another to the list of Grand Committees, but he emphatically supported it because, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) in the remarkable speech, ingenious as it was, had said, the Committee was wanted, not to decide the questions that were laid before it, not to settle the final form of any measure laid before it, but to obtain information as to the opinion of the people of Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman was willing to accept the opinion of the Scotch Members as being the conclusive opinion of the people of Scotland, a course in which the hon. and learned Member (Mr. Finlay) refused to follow him. That being the ground laid down by the right hon. Gentleman, he (Mr. Robertson) failed to see the justice of the limitation which the right hon. Gentleman and the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) attempted to impose upon this procedure. Information was all the House required for a Committee of this sort, and if they wanted to be conclusively and authoritatively informed as to what the opinion of the people of Scotland was on any Scotch measure, what was the use of appointing English or Irish Members on the Committee? One reason why he supported the proposed Grand Committee was that it would procure that information. For tha reason he was in favour of the proposal of the hon. and learned Member for Dumfries, and he hoped the proposal would be submitted to the judgment of the House. Then, in the main, Scotland was a country of Liberal opinions. Even in this time of Liberal political distress, and counting his hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Finlay) and his Colleagues among the Tories, there was a large majority in favour of Liberal opinion in Scotland, which he thought his hon. and learned Friend would find stronger on the next occasion in which the opinion of Scotland was taken. The Governments in times past had also been mainly Liberal; so that, on the whole, the predominant Liberalism of Scotland had found itself dealing with a general Liberal Ministry in the country. What was the future before them? Taking the authority of hon. Members opposite, they were at the beginning of a long run of Unionist Administration. They were at the beginning of 20 years of Unionist domination in this country and of resolute government in Ireland. During these 20 years the prevalent opinions of the Scotch people would be opposed to the Unionist Administration. Therefore, one condition which had kept Scotland quiet under these restrictions and disabilities would be removed. But even if the prognostications of hon. Members opposite were as false as he hoped they would be, it was reasonably certain they had got before them five years of the present Government. He regretted he saw no way out of that, desperate and discouraging as the prospect might appear to be. But during the whole of that time, Scotland, so far as three-fourths of its people were concerned, would be not only neglected, but in active, determined, and, it might be, violent opposition to the Government of the country. With the view of making Scotland more tranquil than she was likely to be, and of making things more easy for the Government, he recommended them to accept the proposal now made. It had been brought forward by his hon. Friend (Dr. Cameron), as an objection to these proposals, that they did not go far enough for the people of Scotland. It was said the people of Scotland wanted Home Rule. He did not know whether they did or not. Some day they might learn their opinion on that subject. For his own part, he thought the people of Scotland would deal considerately with so important a question. He was not himself enamoured of a one-horse Government in Edinburgh. He did not think he should particularly care for a Parliament House Legislature and a Princes Street Executive, and he did not think the people of Scotland were as yet enamoured of either of these objects. But if the Government objected to the extension of the Home Rule principle to Scotland—if they wished the present state of things to remain so far as this Legislature was concerned—then they would do wisely to meet the feeling which underlay this demand of Home Rule for Scotland—for it was a genuine feeling—by conceding the reasonable request preferred by them that night. Because underneath all the most absurd proposals that had been made or might be made for Scotland—for Home Rule for Scotland—lay a genuine, well-founded feeling of dissatisfaction with the mode in which Scottish Business was conducted in this House. His strong conviction was that it would be a good thing for Scotland, for the Empire, and even for Her Majesty's Government to let them have their own way in the matter. And, anxious as they all were to have Scottish opinions on Scottish matters known, let them have the only instrument by which that could be decided, and give them this Grand Committee composed of Scottish Members.

MR. SALT (Stafford) said, the question was not so much whether the proposal of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) benefited one Party or another, but whether it would be really and simply a benefit in respect of carrying on the Business of the House. The proposal before the House had undoubtedly taken a good many forms, for one colour had been given to it by one hon. Member, another by another, and even a third colour had been given to it. It was, therefore, difficult for anyone wishing to approach the subject in a businesslike manner to deal with its real import. He understood, however, the proposal to be this—that there should be a large Grand Committee consisting of Scotch Members only for the consideration of Scotch Business. They had then to consider whether this would forward the Business of Scotland, of the House, or of the country generally. His own opinion was that if a Grand Committee was to be set up to deal with Scotch Business only they would be compelled sooner or later to establish Grand Committees for English, Irish, and Welsh Business, and it must then come to this—that the House would be divided into a number of different and hostile sections; whereas he held that they ought to constitute a united House. But how would they deal with the Scotch Committee, if it was to consist simply of Scotch Members? It was said that the Committee was to exist for the purpose of satisfying the Scotch people by conceding what the Scotch people wanted. But was this great machinery to be set up in order merely to instruct the House as to what Scotch opinion might be on various subjects? They knew already pretty well what public opinion in Scotland was when they had the pleasure of hearing Members from Scotland in debate, and he did not think that any more information could be obtained on that subject by the establishment of the proposed Committee. But there was a further difficulty in the way of the proposal of the hon. Member. Suppose this Grand Committee came to a decision on any question; that decision must come before the House, and they had to ask whether the House would, in such circumstances, always back up and support the decision at which they arrived? There was a great probability that such would not be the case, and then there would arise a condition of things which would certainly not conduce to the forwarding of the Business of the House. The conclusion at which he arrived, then, was that they must stand by the old system of the House—trying to work together as well as they could—and that there should be but one country and one House, governed by the majority of the whole. On the other hand, he entirely agreed with those who said that more opportunities ought to be had for conducting Scotch Business; and no one could enter more warmly than he did into that feeling. But were they not, by the Rules of Procedure then under discussion, trying to give facilities for the transaction of Scotch Business? Their very object was that the work should be lightened for the House, so that more time might be given to the Business of the different parts of the Kingdom. The House was now taking one step, although not perhaps a very large one, in the direction of enabling Scotch Members to get more time for their measures to be discussed; but he could not help thinking that the acceptance of the proposal before the House would not do otherwise than complicate matters more than they were at present. Everyone was aware that Governments of the present day were accustomed to make greater inroads upon the time allotted to private Members than was formerly the case, and it might be said that the opportunities of private Members for legislation had almost passed away. Now he thought that Members of the House might unite to put more pressure on the Government to restore to private Members the right which they so much valued, and which they had very often so well used.

Mr. ANDERSON (Elgin and Nairn) said, he thought it was curious that the only Members who had opposed the proposal from that side of the House were Members of the so-called Liberal Unionist Party. There seemed to exist in their minds a lurking suspicion that it would strengthen the cause of Home Rule in Ireland. He concurred with his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Inverness (Mr. Finlay) in thinking that the proposal involved a Committee composed of Scottish Members. It was suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) that many of the Scottish Members were not acquainted with Scottish local matters. A more astonishing statement was never made in that House. He was certain that the Scottish Members were necessarily acquainted with Scottish local affairs. He supported the proposal on the ground that it met with the approval of nearly the whole of the Members from Scotland, and would be favourably received by the enormous majority of the Scotch people. By the proposal of his hon. Friend it was not intended to take away from the Imperial powers of Parliament.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities) said, he thought they might all be satisfied that they had a very fair specimen of what the working of a Scottish Grand Committee would be in the different views expressed by Scotch Members who had spoken in the discussion. One supported the proposal on the ground that the experiment would succeed, another on the ground that it would be a failure. The hon. and learned

Member for Elgin and Nairn (Mr. Anderson) told them that the speeches which had been made from the Opposition side of the House practically divided themselves between two divisions of the Liberal Party. That went to indicate something more than that the work in a Scottish Grand Committee upstairs might proceed very much upon Party: because it brought into relief this strong fact, that no one in that House—in his heart—could deny that this move at present before the House was a move which had politics and not business at the bottom of it. It was the Home Rule movement, disguise it as they might. If this was a notion which had ever entered the mind of man as a matter of mere business—apart altogether from Party politics—it was very strange that it was never made till the year 1888. That led him to say this, that while they were told that Scottish Business was much neglected by the present Government he would like to know whether the Scottish Liberal Members pressed that upon their own Cabinet, which was in existence from 1880 to 1885?

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I made the same Motion myself when the Liberal Cabinet was in power.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD said, he thought he should draw some statement of that kind, but that was what led him to the point. If the hon. Member pressed his Motion so very much upon the Liberal Cabinet, which contained more Scotsmen than any other Cabinet that was known to history, and was unable to make on them any impression, it was out of the question to blame the present Government. It was entirely a new idea, and there was no man in that House who did not know perfectly well that the proposal to establish Grand Committees, based not on the Business to be done, but on the country to which the Business generally related, never would have entered the mind of any Cabinet or any sensible portion of the House, had it not been that they had certain political measures brought forward in that House a year or two ago. They had had Grand Committees sitting in that House for the purpose of considering particular classes of Business; but that was a very different thing from splitting up the House into different Grand Committees to consider similar Business solely with reference to the particular nationality which was proposed to be represented on that Committee. The proposal was that the whole of the Scottish Members were to sit alone on their own Business, and were to take their share in sitting in the Committees of everybody else's Business. That rather illustrated what had often been said of their country—"We take all we can get and a little more if we can." The proposal seemed to him on the first blush of it to be a most illogical and absurd arrangement. But that was only the first move of the game. The next move would be in regard to another part of the United Kingdom, and then another move with regard to another part of the Kingdom. There was no reason to stop at nationalities at all. Why should the South of England, as they had been told, override the opinion of the North of England if they were going to subdivide upon such principles as that? Nothing was more plain than that they were not subdividing for Business, but for political reasons. It was said that Bills were to be sent to this Committee without passing any second reading; that the second reading was to be disposed of by the Scottish Members upstairs. Could any proposal be more grotesque and absurd, coming from any man who was the least acquainted with business? If the second reading was not to depend on a decision of the House, then nobody would consent to a first reading without taking a Division. The reason why a Division on the first reading was almost never taken was because the opportunity was still before the House of having a full discussion on the principle of the Bill on the second reading. Nothing was more plain on the face of the debate than that hon. Members had no clear idea of the result of this proposal. They all spoke of it as an experiment, and as a thing which could be set aside if unsatisfactory. That was a mode of conducting Business which no sensible man would adopt in his own affairs. The fact that this had been proposed as a pure experiment showed how absurd and ridiculous the proposal was upon the face of it. A good deal of comment had been made on the way Scottish Business had been passed through the House during recent years, and particularly last Session. What bearing had that upon the Committee stage of all Bills being disposed of by a Grand Committee upstairs? He should like to ask the hon. Gentleman the Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) whether he had received any complaints about Bills passed last Session? If not, it rather tended to show that the way those Bills were passed through Committee was perfectly satisfactory. How was the Grand Committee to fail? Was it by the work of the Scottish Members being set aside? If that were to be done, that would be very near a Parliamentary revolution. Or was it to fail from the work of the Scottish Members being so badly done that the House would not accept it? He (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) submitted, upon the whole matter, that it would not be wise in the meantime to go out of the course followed in the past in the appointment of Grand Committees. It was an intelligible, sensible, and reasonable mode of devolution; but to you to propose to facilitate the Business for one locality, the discussion on which showed that political reasons were at the bottom of it, would be to take a step which would have a most unfortunate result on the Business of the House.

SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton) said, he found there had been little said by the right hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) that he required to answer. The right hon. and learned Gentleman said this was a Party question, and that the Members of the Liberal Government who now supported it, opposed it when in Office. He would not enter into contention on that point. [*Laughter.*] No; and the reason why was because that class of thought had been excluded from the debate. For the right hon. and learned Gentleman to try and make out a case of inconsistency against the Liberal Front Bench was as ungenerous as though he himself had twitted the First Lord of the Treasury with his original objection to the Closure, a reminder which he should have been ashamed to use. It was because this was a new experiment that they asked it as a tentative measure until they saw the result. The whole argument for the Grand Committees was the block of Business in the House. It was because there was a block in Scottish Business that they asked that the same remedy should be applied as in the case of English Business. There could hardly be any doubt that there was at the present time considerable dissatisfaction and discontent in Scotland as to the treatment measured out to legislation affecting that country. When they were taunted from opposite Benches with being desirous of trying experiments, they could not forget that on those Benches the proposal had that night been accepted of trying the experiment of adding agricultural questions to those which the General Committee upon Trade would have to consider. Something must be done to stay the growing dissatisfaction in Scotland. The satisfaction at the appointment of a Secretary for Scotland had been followed by disappointment that the person holding that office was in the House of Lords, and that he was not in the Cabinet. His hon. Friend the Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) spoke with great force upon the extremely serious and significant fact that the Scottish Executive was not dependent upon the majority, but the minority of the Scottish Representatives. That was a most serious matter; but what he (Sir George Trevelyan) was anxious about was, that if they could not get on in the way of administration, at any rate let them get on in the way of legislation. This was a very moderate proposal for the purpose of meeting a great amount of dissatisfaction. He hoped hon. Members would confine their remarks, as the hon. and learned Member for Inverness (Mr. Finlay) had not done, and as the Lord Advocate had not done, to the proposal before the House. The hon. and learned Member accused the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) with having some sinister motive for altering his Resolution. The change was made with no sinister purpose, but simply and solely with the object of placing the Resolution before the House in the simplest form. It was to give the House an opportunity of getting the opinion of their Scottish Colleagues on Scottish affairs, in a concentrated shape, and expressed in a matured form. The Chief Secretary for Ireland said that it was the immemorial custom of the House to frame its Committees so as to represent the political feeling of the House. He (Sir George Trevelyan) must say he did not think that was the intention in the case of these Grand Committees. In their case the object was to keep politics as far as possible out of them; and he hoped the Scottish Grand Committee would be so constituted as to represent Scottish opinion on Scottish questions, irrespective of politics. The Chief Secretary was afraid of a conflict between the majority of the House and the majority of the Scottish Members on the Grand Committee. He would tell the right hon. Gentleman that there was such a conflict constantly going on in the House now between the majority of Scottish Members and the majority of the House; but that contest was carried on in a covert and somewhat unobserved manner, whereas what they wanted to do was to drag the whole thing into the light of day. What happened now? A Scottish debate took place. The Scottish arguments were generally not of a sort to fascinate English Members. English Members left the House in great numbers, and if they did so for good, the Scottish Members would be very well satisfied. But they came back again to vote. Illustrations of that had occurred recently. On the Motion of the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) 36 Scotch Members voted for it and 11 against it; but that Motion was rejected by a majority of the House. The next day, on the Crofters' Amendment Bill, 36 Members voted one way and nine the other, and yet the Scotch majority was outvoted by a majority of the House. On the same day it discussed the method of electing the Scotch Parochial Boards, which scarcely any English Member could understand, and on, that matter, too, a large majority of Scotch Members were outvoted by a majority of the House. These were examples of what was continually going on, and English Members were not ashamed of what they did, because in those big Divisions they could not pick out and identify their Scottish Colleagues and see which way they went. But it would be a different business when the Scottish Members were gathered together into a Committee room upstairs, and went into the details of measures, and those Bills came down as the voice of Scotland, so far as it could be expressed by the Scottish Representatives. In that case he believed English Members who now voted so freely against them would think twice or thrice before going against the undoubted feeling of the people of Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary gave them a long list of Scottish measures passed last Session; but they were a poor set of measures indeed, and the reason was that the House had not time to consider any important ones, and was too conscientious to pass important measures without considering them. One was the Secretary for Scotland Bill. He did not hesitate to say that if that Bill had gone to a Grand Committee it would have come out a very different one; but this list was chiefly conspicuous for the absence of one Bill—the Scotch Universities Bill—which would have been worth all the rest put together. It was not passed, because the House could not find time to discuss it; yet he believed it would have passed without a Division on the second reading, and then would have gone up to a Committee, and the Committee would have given the time to it which the House could not give, and so a Bill would have been passed which, as he had said, was worth all the rest put together. The right hon. Gentleman and he had had one great advantage—the advantage of a unique administrative experience. They had both of them—the right hon. Gentleman and himself—been Scottish and Irish Secretaries. Now, he should have thought the right hon. Gentleman would have hesitated before rejecting this proposal; because it was brought forward some years ago in the case of Ireland, and was rejected. He did not see that now it was renewed; but if that proposal had not been rejected, then he must say that the one great cause of most of the serious grievances Ireland had against this country would have been, if not removed, at least greatly mitigated —that grievance being that Irish Bills concerning Ireland only, on which the majority of Irish Members were almost unanimous, were not accepted by the House. If a Bill for extending the municipal franchise in Ireland had been referred to an Irish Grand Committee, and had then been presented to the House of Commons, he felt satisfied that the House would not have consented to throw away the work of perhaps a third of the Session, but would have passed a Bill to remedy one of the greatest grievances of

Ireland. As to the contention of the Chief Secretary that these Bills contained principles which applied likewise to England, and that it was unfair to accept the Scotch idea with regard to these principles, he maintained that if it was unfair for Scotch Members to obtain an ideal of their own which might not be palatable to England, it must be infinitely harder for Scotland to have the English ideal imposed by English votes upon Scotland—the weaker country, the country which could only influence England by example, but could impose nothing on her by votes. He felt that he had detained them too long on a discussion of this kind, and he would simply now restate the three arguments brought forward by the hon. Member for the Partick Division of Lanarkshire (Mr. Craig Sellar). In the first place, Scottish views on Scottish affairs were overridden by English opinion. The hon. Baronet the Member for Wigton (Sir Herbert Maxwell) said they ought to pay deference to the views of the entire nation. Now, why should Scotland defer to the view of the entire nation in the matter of the regulation of her liquor traffic, or on the question whether she should pay pensions to her police? The hon. Member went further, and said they were dealing with world-wide questions. Was it credible that the hon. Member should think that the civilized world cared three-halfpence or three bawbees about the question of hypothec? If they had this Committee, they would then obtain in a finished shape the public opinion of Scotland. Secondly, there was the question of the amount of Business. The hon. and learned Member for Dundee (Mr. E. Robertson) had done well to show up what was called by farce a Scottish Parliament. This Scottish Parliament had sat here for a couple of Wednesdays only—that was to say, they, a ninth part of the Representatives of the Kingdom, had about a 90th part of the time, and yet people spoke of a Scottish Parliament. Then, last and greatest of all, there was the growing feeling of dissatisfaction in Scotland. To meet that feeling, the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) had brought forward a very moderate proposal. He (Sir George Trevelyan) would regret if it was rejected, and he thought Scotland would regret it still more, and would in some respects almost resent some of the arguments, and especially some brought forward from Benches behind him, in favour of its rejection. The way in which it was proposed by the Government plan to recognize the nationality of Scotland was by putting some four or five Scottsih Members on the two Grand Committees on Law and Justice, which, perhaps, would not have a Scottish Bill before them once in three years. He and his Friends proposed a very different plan. They believed it to be an innocent and salutary remedy, and, at the same time, they believed it would redress a great practical grievance, and meet and soothe the genuine feelings of the people of Scotland.

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University) said, he could understand his right hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow (Sir George Trevelyan) objecting to Members being taunted with changes of opinion; but on this particular subject the right hon. Gentleman was free from any such imputations, because he did not take part in the debate when this topic last occupied the attention of the House. In 1882, when this question was before the House the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) opposed it. He (Mr. Raikes) did not wish to attach too much importance to that, because, although the right hon. Gentleman had supported it to-night, the reasons he gave for doing so were reasons which he passed by, and did not attempt to contravene in 1882. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian then reserved to himself the liberty of judgment which he had been free to exercise. and had exercised that right by adopting a different line. But the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) took a very strong part in opposing a kindred proposition on that occasion, and Sir Edward Colebrooke, then a Liberal Member of the House, objected to the provincialism of the Amendment. That was not a Party opinion, but was one which found an echo in many parts of Scotland. He (Mr. Raikes) did not believe that the Scottish people were really enamoured of a scheme which was so much to lower their position in the Imperial Legislature. It was important to observe the difference between the forms of the Motion as it was put upon the Paper, and it was now submitted to the House. The Amendment first proposed was that another Grand Committee should be formed on the same microcosmic principles as the other two, but it had been thrown over by its parent for one perfectly different. This Grand Committee was not to be formed with the same limitations as to scope as the other Committees, for while only Bills relating to law and justice or to trade, manufacture, or agriculture, were to be sent to Grand Committees, and all other Bills were still reserved to the consideration of the Committee of the whole House, this Amendment would give to a Scottish Grand Committee the entire control of all the Committees on all Bills, however important, however revolutionary might be their character, and would exclude from their consideration all other Members of the House. It was, therefore, proposed to give to that Grand Committee attributes and jurisdiction entirely different from, and immensely exceeding, those given to other Grand Committees. But the Amendment carried with it other consequences, for this Grand Committee would presumably contain all the most prominent and leading Members of the House of Commons who represented Scottish constituencies, and, therefore, the other Grand Committees would be deprived of their services. Could a more abnormal and more anomalous position be imagined? The only thing resembling it that he could imagine was that which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Glasgow did so much to save the Irish Members from two years ago, when it was proposed to give the Irish Members exclusive jurisdiction over Irish affairs, and to exclude them from having any part in Imperial affairs. The Amendment of the hon. and learned Member who formerly represented Hereford, but now sat for some Scotch borough (Mr. R. T. Reid) was altogether different in its scope, and had the merit of being more logical. The hon. and learned Member had proposed to refer the second reading of Bills to the Scotch Grand Committee, thus removing that stage from the jurisdiction of the House itself. [*Cries of* "No, no!"]——

MR. R. T. REID: I did nothing of the kind.

MR. RAIKES: True, the proposition was qualified by the words, "unless the House should otherwise order," but the hon. Member proposed to delegate to a Committee upstairs powers in connection with the stage of second reading which at present were exercised by the whole House. That, he believed, would oust the jurisdiction of the House as far as second readings were concerned. The House was asked to transfer to a Committee a jurisdiction which had hitherto been exercised informally and with advantage by the majority of the Scottish Members. Some hon. Members seemed to think that Scotland had fared worse at the hands of the House of Commons than Ireland because there were fewer debates upon Scotch matters. The difference was that where the Irishmen got the debate, the Scotsmen got the measures. But under the system which prevailed in the course of last Session no less than 11 Bills of varying importance were passed for the benefit of Scotland. His hon. Friend opposite called that a poor list, but one of these measures was the Technical Education Bill; and, in respect of that important subject, Scotland had actually received a boon which England could not get. In fact, the English Education Bill was sacrificed in a great measure to the Scotch Bill. [*Cries of* "No!"] At all events the Scotch Bill was persevered with and the English Bill was not. The present arrangement with regard to Scotch Bills was this, Members representing Scotch constituencies found opportunities for discussing certain Bills among themselves, they then brought these Bills before the Secretary for Scotland, and in the end they passed through the House after some merely formal debate. He was not aware that the fact there was was no prolonged discussion in the House in any way diminished the value of a measure when passed. It had been suggested that Scotland was entitled to this proposed Grand Committee on local grounds. But if the proposal were acceded to in the case of Scotland, how could they resist the demands of other parts of the country for similar Committees? How refuse Wales or Ireland, or even London, Lancashire, or Yorkshire? It was rather remarkable that on this occasion Scotland should be the horse to run for the Separatist stable, while Ireland was kept in the background. The scheme if logically carried out would lead to the absolute disintegration of the Imperial Parliament. It did not appear to him to be compatible with the Parliamentary institutions under which we lived. Hon. Members ought not willingly to reduce the House to the position of a Chamber for the acceptance of mere broad principles divorced from all details. To adopt proposals of this kind would reduce the House to a mere place of academic disputation in regard to broad principles; and the result would be half a dozen local Parliaments, which would, perhaps, enact in every part of the country measures absolutely different from each other, and make this country not a United Kingdom, but rather a group of disunited States.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) said, those who opposed the Motion before the House evaded the point at issue. The right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) for instance, had argued against the proposal of the hon. and learned Member for Dumfries (Mr. R. T. Reid) which was not now before the House, and ignoring altogether the fact that Scotland had separate laws, a separate Church, and separate customs and habits, he had endeavoured to show a similarity between Scotland and Yorkshire. Scotland suffered from a distinct evil under the present system, and that evil was that Scotch Business was not properly attended to in that House. They could not get time to discuss Scotch Business, and when Scotch measures were produced by the Government, the Scotch Members were told to pass them at the point of the bayonet—they were told that unless they passed them immediately and without proper time for discussion, they would not be passed at all. Reference had been made to the passing of the Scotch Technical Schools Bill; but at the time when that Bill was brought forward the Scotch Members pointed out that it was quite inadequate, a mere outline sketch of a scheme. They were, however, told that if they did not dispose of it on that Wednesday for which five Bills had been put down, it would be dropped. This was characteristic of the manner in which Scotch Business was conducted in that House. Indeed, it must be taken as admitted by the language of the Government that Scotland in this matter had great cause of complaint. If a Scotch Grand Committee were appointed it could deal properly with Scotch Business. As the Government did not accept this suggestion, what suggestion had they to make to meet the present admittedly unsatisfactory state of things? Under the new Rules of Procedure Scotch Business would fare even worse than hitherto. In the first place the available time was shortened and the opportunities of discussing Scotch Bills as heretofore between 12 o'clock and 3 o'clock in the morning would no longer exist. This system of devolution would be no relief to Grand Committees so far as Scotch Business was concerned unless a Scotch Committee was appointed. The principle of the system of devolution was that Bills should be referred to Committees composed of Members with special knowledge of the subjects with which the Bills respectively dealt. But what would be the advantage of referring Bills dealing with Law and Courts of Justice in Scotland to the Law and Justice Grand Committee, which would only contain a few Scotch Members, and the majority of which would know little or nothing of the subject? The same argument applied to Bills dealing with Scotch agriculture and commerce. Of a Grand Committee consisting of 75 Members, only about eight would be Scotch Members. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) let the cat out of the bag when he said the reason that the Government objected to the plan of a Scotch Grand Committee was that it would interfere with the balance of Parties in the House.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, that he stated nothing of the kind. He said that to appoint a Scotch Committee would be a new departure; that hitherto Committees of this House had been arranged with the balance of Parties corresponding with the balance of Parties in the House, and that it would be a very serious thing to depart from that arrangement.

Mr. BRYCE said, the practice referred to by the right hon. Gentleman only applied to Select Committees, and not to Grand Committees. The right hon. Gentleman had pointed out that a Bill might pass through the Scotch Grand Committee in a shape unacceptable to the Government, and had argued that the Government, which were supported by a majority consisting mainly of English Members, ought not to allow a Bill to pass unless it conformed to their views. The Scotch Members claimed to have the legislation for Scotland passed which the people of Scotland wanted, whether the Ministry, supported by an English majority, wished it or not. No doubt the Government would be justified in the case of a Scotch Bill which raised wide political issues in withholding it from the Grand Committee, and in having its Committee stage disposed of in Committee of the whole House, and this was provided for by the words of the hon. and learned Member for Dumfries's Motion, "unless the House shall otherwise order."

MR. RAIKES said, he would point out that there were no such words in the Motion then before the House.

MR. BRYCE said, that made no difference, because the House, of course, possessed the inherent power of keeping any Bill for discussion in the House itself. On Bills raising wide political issues, no doubt the Government of the day might be justified in exercising a veto; but on ordinary Bills it was not the liking or dislike of the Government that should prevail. The claim he put forward related to Bills raising no vital political issue, but relating to matters so peculiarly and distinctively Scotch that the wishes of the Scotch people ought to be suffered to prevail. Hitherto the question of reconciling the conflicting claims of the Scottish majority and the general majority in the delicate matter of Scotch legislation had only been temporarily solved by the Government being willing to give way to the strong expression of Scotch opinion. That was what Scotch Members desired to see recognized as the rule. The Grand Committees which sat a few years ago did not discuss the Bills submitted to them in a partizan spirit. All the Scotch Members asked for was that Scotch Bills should be considered by a Grand Committee in similar spirit. They believed it would be a great service to the country to allow Scotch Members to advance their own measures in their own way. They might try the experiment of sending Scottish Bills of a non-Party character to a Grand Committee, and the House might reserve for its own consideration such Scottish Bills as they thought were not fit for the Grand Committee. If the House refused, he was bound to say he had considerable apprehensions of the result. This was a very temperate and moderate proposal. It was one which could not do much harm, and which could be revoked at any moment. The Government ought to know that there was a feeling growing up in Scotland that the majority of the House of Commons was claiming too much authority over distinctively Scotch measures. There was a growing feeling that some special provision must be made for Scotland. Scotch Members asked the Government to satisfy that demand while it was still in a tender stage. Let not the Government aggravate Scotch feeling as they had aggravated Irish feeling. Let them take warning from the example of Ireland. Let the Government give a reasonable attention to the demands which the Scotch people made, believing that, with the practical good sense which characterized the nation, they would not ask more if they could get some practical measure like this to satisfy their reasonable desires.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin) said, he thought a few words might be of use to call the attention of the House exactly to what they were asked to vote upon. He had heard the last speech or two with considerable surprise, and he would like to compare the arguments of the Speakers with the exact proposal before the House. His hon. Friend the Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) proposed to add to the Resolution on the Paper the words—

> "That there be added another standing Committee for the consideration of all Bills relating to Scotch Business only."

He submitted that the addition of the words would leave the matter exactly where it stood before—that was to say, that the additional Standing Committee would be similarly constituted and subject to the same Rules as the others. That was the sense in which it was supported by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread), who said distinctly that he could not support the proposal unless he understood that it was a proposal for a Committee of the same nature as the other Standing Committees now proposed to be revived. The hon. Gentleman said he would not accept a Committee exclusively formed of Scotch Members, or a Committee containing a preponderating number of Scotch Members. Again, the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) was conceived in the same sense, and it was to such a Committee only as the Member for Bedford indicated, that the right hon. Gentleman gave his adhesion. The argument, therefore, of the right hon. Gentleman opposite fell entirely to the ground, and the cases which he had adduced would not be touched at all by the proposal of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy, which applied only to Bills which had survived the general sense of the House, and gone for consideration before that Grand Committee. The hon. Member for Kirkcaldy apparently did not understand the words of the Standing Order with regard to the constitution of Grand Committees. The Standing Committees were to be nominated, and the numbers were to be appointed by the Committee of Selection which should have regard to the class of Bills committed to such Committees and to the composition of the House; so that the Scotch Members on the proposed Committee would only get their quota of the whole. Again, his hon. Friend the Member for South Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) was in error in speaking only of the proportion of 8½ Scotch Members; because it was in the power of the Committee of Selection to add another 15 Members to serve on the Grand Committees for the consideration of any Bill. If a Scotch Bill, therefore, were referred, there would no doubt be added 15 Scotch Members, so that there would be 23 Members representing Scotland on the Committee whenever a Scotch Bill was referred. The whole question was whether they should for the purpose of the devolution of Business set up Grand Committees to which Bills read a second time should be referred for further discussion. The system of devolution which they had adopted proceeded on the principle of referring Bills to Grand Committees according to the class to which such Bills belonged. It was now proposed to introduce a new class and refer Bills on the principle of their local application. It was a plea for the further and fuller consideration of Bills which had been discussed in the House and which discussion had been considered adequate. If the meaning of the Amendment was that when other means of considering Bills were exhausted, he saw no difficulty in accepting the proposal. But he could only accept it if other means of consideration were exhausted, because he thought the principle mischievous and inferior as compared with the existing Rule. He preferred that Bills should be considered with regard to the subjects with which they dealt. He would rather, for instance, have a Scotch Liquor Bill considered with an English Liquor Bill, and the same with regard to a Bill on Scotch Education. [*Cries of* "Oh, Oh!"] The murmurs which he heard, he ventured to say, were murmurs of provincialism; and he thought Scotch legislation might be improved by having its Bills referred to Grand Committees in the way he had indicated. It was said that Scotch Business had a right to receive sufficient attention at the hands of the House; but it was yet to be proved that Scotch Bills considered with English Bills by Grand Committees would not receive due attention. He saw no reason why they should not have three or four Standing Committees. His hon. Friend the Member for Bedford had assented to the principle that in the case of say a Scotch Education Bill, 15 Scotch Members would be added to the Grand Committee who considered the Bill. If the House was driven by necessity to these local provisions, let them be accepted, but only then. At present, they were not so driven, because they had not tried the experiment of Grand Committees on a sufficiently large scale. Let the plan have a fair trial, and if it failed, it would be time enough to fall back on the present proposal, which he regarded as an inferior process.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) said, he would not occupy more than a minute or two. He was going to support the Government, because he preferred that the House should mutilate and muddle Scottish Business. He preferred that Scottish opinion should be over-ridden by ill-informed English opinions. He preferred that the constitution of the Scottish Church should be decided by English Episcopalians and Irish Roman Catholics, because he thought the solution proposed was no solution of the question at all. The Union of Scotland with England was like the union of a race horse with a cart horse. The hon. and learned Member for Inverness (Mr.

Finlay) looked upon Scotland as a parish, and the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) looked upon it as a municipality or a county. In Scotland they were overtaxed, and treated with niggardliness and meanness. There was strong dissatisfaction, and he wished that dissatisfaction to go on increasing. The only way when the incompetency of the House to deal with Scotch questions became manifest was to have Scottish Business transacted in Scotland by a Scottish Parliament and a Scottish Executive.

Question put.

The House *divided:*—Ayes 137; Noes 214; Majority 77.

AYES.

Abraham, W. (Limerick, W.)
Acland, A. H. D.
Acland, C. T. D.
Anderson, C. H.
Asquith, H. H.
Barbour, W. B.
Biggar, J. G.
Bolton, T. D.
Bright, W. L.
Broadhurst, H.
Brown, A. L.
Bruce, hon. R. P.
Bryce, J.
Buchanan, T. R.
Burt, T.
Caldwell, J.
Cameron, C.
Cameron, J. M.
Campbell, H.
Campbell-Bannerman, right hon. H.
Carew, J. L.
Causton, R. K.
Cavan, Earl of
Channing, F. A.
Colman, J. J.
Commins, A.
Conway, M.
Cossham, H.
Cox, J. R.
Cozens-Hardy, H. H.
Craig, J.
Cremer, W. R.
Crilly, D.
Deasy, J.
Dillon, J.
Dillwyn, L. L.
Duff, R. W.
Ellis, J.
Ellis, T. E.
Esslemont, P.
Farquharson, Dr. R.
Fenwick, C.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro-
Finucane, J.
Firth, J. F. B.
Flower, C.
Foley, P. J.
Foster, Sir W. B.
Fowler, rt. hn. H. H.
Gill, T. P.
Gladstone, H. J.
Grey, Sir E.
Gully, W. C.
Haldane, R. B.
Harrington, E.
Harris, M.
Hayden, L. P.
Hayne, C. Seale-
Hooper, J.
Hunter, W. A.
Jacoby, J. A.
Joicey, J.
Kilbride, D.
Lawson, H. L. W.
Lefevre, right hon. G. J. S.
Lewis, T. P.
Lockwood, F.
M'Arthur, W. A.
M'Donald, P.
M'Ewan, W.
M'Lagan, P.
M'Laren, W. S. B.
Mahony, P.
Maskelyne, M. H. N. Story-
Menzies, R. S.
Morgan, rt. hon. G. O.
Morley, rt. hon. J.
Morley, A.
Mundella, rt. hon. A. J.
Murphy, W. M.
Nolan, Colonel J. P.
Nolan, J.
O'Brien, J. F. X.
O'Brien, P.
O'Brien, P. J.
O'Connor, A.
O'Connor, J.
O'Kelly, J.
Parnell, C. S.
Pease, A. E.
Pickersgill, E. H.
Pinkerton, J.
Playfair, right hon. Sir L.
Plowden, Sir W. C.
Power, P. J.
Price, T. P.
Provand, A. D.
Quinn, T.
Rathbone, W.
Reed, R. T.
Rendel, S.
Roberts, J.
Roberts, J. B.
Robertson, E.
Roe, T.
Rollit, Sir A. K.
Roscoe, Sir H. E.
Rowlands, J.
Russell, T. W.
Schwann, C. E.
Sheehan, J. D.
Smith, S.
Spencer, hon. C. R.
Stack, J.
Stanhope, hon. P. J.
Stevenson, F. S.
Stevenson, J. C.
Stewart, H.
Stuart, J.
Sullivan, D.
Summers, W.
Sutherland, A.
Trevelyan, right hon. Sir G. O.
Tuite, J.
Vivian, Sir H. H.
Waddy, S. D.
Wallace, R.
Warmington, C. M.
Wayman, T.
Whitbread, S.
Will, J. S.
Williams, A. J.
Williamson, S.
Wilson, H. J.
Wilson, I.
Winterbotham, A. B.
Woodhead, J.

TELLERS.
Campbell, Sir G.
Crawford, D.

NOES.

Addison, J. E. W.
Agg-Gardner, J. T.
Ainslie, W. G.
Allsopp, hon. G.
Allsopp, hon. P.
Ambrose, W.
Amherst, W. A. T.
Anstruther, H. T.
Ashmead-Bartlett, E.
Baden-Powell, Sir G. S.
Bailey, Sir J. R.
Baird, J. G. A.
Balfour, rt. hon. A. J.
Barclay, J. W.
Baring, Viscount
Baring, T. C.
Barry, A. H. Smith-
Bartley, G. C. T.
Barttelot, Sir W. B.
Bates, Sir E.
Baumann, A. A.
Beach, right hon. Sir M. E. Hicks-
Beach, W. W. B.
Beadel, W. J.
Beaumont, W. B.
Bentinck, rt. hn. G. C.
Bentinck, W. G. C.
Bickford-Smith, W.
Bigwood, J.
Birkbeck, Sir E.
Bolitho, T. B.
Bond, G. H.
Bonsor, H. C. O.
Borthwick, Sir A.
Brodrick, hon. W. St. J. F.
Brookfield, A. M.
Bruce, Lord H.
Burghley, Lord
Campbell, J. A.
Carmarthen, Marq. of
Chamberlain, R.
Charrington, S.
Churchill, rt. hn. Lord R. H. S.
Clarke, Sir E. G.
Clark, Dr. G. B.
Cochrane-Baillie, hon. C. W. A. N.
Coghill, D. H.
Colomb, Capt. J. C. R.
Commerell, Adml. Sir J. E.
Compton, F.
Corbett, A. C.
Corry, Sir J. P.
Cotton, Capt. E. T. D.
Courtney, L. H.
Cross, H. S.
Crossman, Gen. Sir W.
Currie, Sir D.
Curzon, hon. G. N.
Dalrymple, Sir C.
Darling, C. J.
De Cobain, E. S. W.
De Lisle, E. J. L. M. P.
De Worms, Baron H.
Dixon, G.
Dixon-Hartland, F. D.
Donkin, R. S.
Dorington, Sir J. E.
Dugdale, J. S.
Duncan, Colonel F.
Dyke, right hon. Sir W. H.
Ebrington, Viscount
Edwards-Moss, T. C.
Ewing, Sir A. O.
Eyre, Colonel H.
Fergusson, right hon. Sir J.
Fielden, T.
Finlay, R. B.
Fisher, W. H.
Fitzgerald, R. U. P.
Folkestone, right hon. Viscount
Forwood, A. B.
Fowler, Sir R. N.
Fraser, General C. C.
Fry, L.
Fulton, J. F.

Gathorne-Hardy, hon. A. E.
Gedge, S.
Gent-Davis, R.
Giles, A.
Gilliat, J. S.
Goldsmid, Sir J.
Goldsworthy, Major General W. T.
Gorst, Sir J. E.
Goschen, rt. hon. G. J.
Gray, C. W.
Grimston, Viscount
Grotrian, F. B.
Halsey, T. F.
Hambro, Col. C. J. T.
Hamilton, right hon. Lord G. F.
Hamilton, Lord E.
Hankey, F. A.
Hardcastle, F.
Hartington, Marquess of
Havelock - Allan, Sir H. M.
Heathcote, Capt. J. H. Edwards-
Heaton, J. H.
Heneage, right hon. E
Herbert, hon. S.
Hill, right hon. Lord A. W.
Hill, Colonel E. S.
Hoare, E. B.
Hoare, S.
Hobhouse, H.
Howorth, H. H.
Hozier, J. H. C.
Hughes, Colonel E.
Hughes - Hallett, Col. F. C.
Hunt, F. S.
Hunter, Sir W. G.
Isaacs, L. H.
Isaacson, F. W.
Jackson, W. L.
James, rt. hon. Sir H.
Jardine, Sir R.
Jarvis, A. W.
Jeffreys, A. F.
Johnston, W.
Kennaway, Sir J. H.
Kerans, F. H.
King, H. S.
Knowles, L.
Lafone, A.
Laurie, Colonel R. P.
Lawrence, W. F.
Legh, T. W.
Lewisham, right hon Viscount
Llewellyn, E. H.
Long, W. H.
Lowther, hon. W.
Lubbock, Sir J.
Lymington, Viscount
Macartney, W. G. E.
Macdonald, rt. hon. J. H. A.
Maclean, F. W.
Maclure, J. W.
M'Calmont, Captain J.
Madden, D. H.
Makins, Colonel W. T.
Malcolm, Col. J. W.
Mallock, R.
Marriott, rt. hn. W. T.
Matthews, rt. hon. H.
Maxwell, Sir H. E.
Mayne, Adml. R. C.
More, R. J.
Morgan, hon. F.
Mount, W. G.
Mowbray, R. G. C.
Muntz, P. A.
Noble, W.
Northcote, hon. Sir H. S.
Norton, R.
Paget, Sir R. H.
Parker, hon. F.
Pelly, Sir L.
Penton, Captain F. T.
Plunket, rt. hon. D. R.
Powell, F. S.
Raikes, right hon. H. C.
Rankin, J.
Rasch, Major F. C.
Ritchie, rt. hn. C. T.
Robinson, B.
Round, J.
Russell, Sir G.
Salt, T.
Saunderson, Col. E. J.
Sellar, A. C.
Seton-Karr, H.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H.
Sidebotham, J. W.
Sidebottom, W.
Sinclair, W. P.
Smith, right hon. W. H.
Smith, A.
Spencer, J. E.
Stanhope, rt. hon. E.
Stanley, E. J.
Stephens, H. C.
Stewart, M. J.
Sutherland, T.
Sykes, C.
Talbot, J. G.
Taylor, F.
Temple, Sir R.
Thorburn, W.
Tomlinson, W. E. M.
Trotter, H. J.
Walsh, hon. A. H. J.
Waring, Colonel T.
Webster, Sir R. E.
West, Colonel W. C.
Weymouth, Viscount
Wharton, J. L.
White, J. B.
Whitley, E.
Whitmore, C. A.
Wodehouse, E. R.
Wolmer, Viscount
Wood, N.
Wortley, C. B. Stuart-
Wright, H. S.
Young, C. E. B.

TELLERS.

Douglas, A. Akers-
Walrond, Col. W. H.

It being Midnight, the Debate on the Main Question, as amended, stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed *To-morrow*.

MOTIONS.

—o—

DISTRESS FOR RENT (DUBLIN) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Murphy, Bill to amend the Law relating to the levying of Distress for Rent, and for the execution of small debts, in the city of Dublin, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Murphy, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Dwyer Gray, Mr. T. D. Sullivan, Captain M'Calmont, and Mr. T. Harrington.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 159.]

STEAM BOILERS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Provand, Bill to amend the Law relating to, and provide for the compulsory examination of, Steam Boilers, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Provand, Mr. Octavius V. Morgan, and Mr. William Abraham.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 160.]

REFORMATORY SCHOOLS ACT (1866) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Dugdale, Bill to amend "The Reformatory Schools Act, 1866," *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Dugdale, Mr. Whitmore, Mr. Wharton, Mr. Curzon, Mr. Dixon, and Mr. Mark Stewart.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 161.]

House adjourned at Ten minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 7th March, 1888.

MINUTES.]—SELECT COMMITTEES—Rating and Valuation (Scotland), *nominated*, Debates and Proceedings in Parliament, *appointed* and *nominated*.

PUBLIC BILLS—*Second Reading*—Mining Leases (Cornwall and Devon) * [114]; Solicitors (Ireland) * [140],

ORDER OF THE DAY.

—o—

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE). — XIII. — STANDING COMMITTEES.—RESOLUTION.

[ADJOURNED DEBATE.] [FIFTH NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Main Question, as amended,

"That the Resolutions of the House of the 1st December, 1882, relating to the Constitution and Proceedings of Standing Committees for the Consideration of Bills relating to Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure, and to Trade, Shipping, and Manufactures, be revived, and that Trade shall include Agriculture and Fishing.—(*Mr. W. H. Smith.*)

Main Question, as amended, again proposed.

Debate *resumed.*

MR. RATHBONE (Carnarvonshire, Arfon), in rising to move at the end of the Rule to add the following words:—

> "That there be another Grand Committee, similarly constituted, and subject to the same rules, the Members for Wales and Monmouthshire being Members of such Committee, for the consideration of all Bills relating to Wales which may, by order of the House in each case, be committed to it,"

said, he did not propose to detain the House long, as the principle of the Resolution had undergone a very full discussion yesterday on the Scotch Resolution. He would only mention that Wales was in a very different position from Scotland in regard to legislation; because Scotland managed to get 14 public Bills passed through the House last year, whereas Wales was not even allowed to pass one; not even a measure for technical education, which Scotland got, but which the Principality required far more than Scotland. It was proposed in 1878 by the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) in Committee of the Business of the House, in a draft Report prepared by the hon. Member—

> "That whenever any public Bill relating exclusively to the affairs of either England, Ireland, or Scotland has been read a second time it shall be referred, unless otherwise directed by the House, to a Committee consisting of the Members representing counties and places in England if the Bill relates to England, or of the Members representing Ireland or Scotland respectively if the Bill relates to Ireland or Scotland. Such Bill shall not be afterwards considered in Committee of the Whole House, unless specially ordered, but shall be considered on Report in the whole House."

Those who had carefully watched what had gone on in England since that Resolution was proposed would see that if the suggestion it contained, modified perhaps in its exact form, had been adopted, most of the present difficulties with Ireland and other parts of the Kingdom would have been got over. He believed that a great many of those difficulties had arisen of late years, not so much from indisposition on the part of the House to give to Ireland, Scotland, and Wales the legislation they required, but the delay which had been caused owing to an absolute want of time for considering carefully the details of the measures adopted to meet the wants of those countries, and the absence of local knowledge in the House generally, to enable them to be dealt with. Owing to that delay, remedies which, by their subsequent adoption by the House were proved to be right, had come too late to prevent disorder, suffering, and even crime. It was admitted that the House could not attend adequately to the Business before it without some form of division of labour, and surely the best division of labour was to leave the adjustment of the details in Committee to those who were really interested in the question and understood it best. His Resolution would take no real power from the House. It would simply save to the House the time now passed in discussing the details of a Bill, and it would enable the House on the Report stage to discuss those essential principles on which it was necessary that the opinions of the House should be expressed. It was evident that both in Wales and Scotland, as well as in Ireland, there had grown up of late a great deal of bitterness of feeling from what was considered to be the neglect of Welsh and Scotch Business, and he thought the House should give some facilities and provide some practical means of carrying out special legislation for the different parts of the country. In the proposal he made there was no intention to confine the Members of the Committee to Wales. On the contrary, at least one-half would be taken from the House generally. He believed that was a matter of considerable importance and value, because not only would the Grand Committee have upon it a number of experienced Members, but it would bring the Committee more in touch with the House, and render it much more influential in carrying out the Resolutions of the Committee. Both on the ground of justice and on the ground of expediency, he hoped the House would accept the Resolution, and he would only add that, though he admitted that Scotland had a sort of customary right to claim an appointment of such a Standing Committee, yet it was far more necessary for Wales, because that Principality had not so large a representation in the House, and had not, as Scotland had, a Parliamentary Secretary of State to represent their grievances and enforce attention to their wants. With these brief observations, he would move the Amendment which stood in his name.

MR. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.) said, he rose to second the Amendment of his hon. Friend. He had listened with very close attention to nearly all the speeches which were delivered last night on the Resolution of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell), and he felt bound to say that nearly every one of the arguments in that speech could be repeated with greater force in favour of the proposal of his hon. Friend. As things now stood Scotchmen it was admitted did sometimes get what they wanted; Welshmen never did. It was stated by the Postmaster General, last night, that last Session 11 Scotch Bills were passed into law; but the right hon. Gentleman had understated the case, because the actual number was 14. How many Welsh Bills were passed, and how many Welsh Bills were even discussed? His right hon. Friend the Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow (Sir George Trevelyan) complained yesterday that Scotch Business only appropiated to itself 1-90th part of the time of the House; but Welsh Business did not occupy 1-900th, or 1-9,000th part of the time of the House, and he thought the explanation was that which had just been given by his hon. Friend—namely, that the Scotch people were represented in the Executive. They had a Scotch Secretary of State, who was usually, although not at present, a Member of the Cabinet; they had a very able Lord Advocate and a Solicitor General, on whom they could put pressure; and, further, two of the very ablest and most active Members of the Government were also Scotchmen born. In the last Government no less than six Members of the Liberal Cabinet were either Scotch, or Members for Scotch constituencies. But whoever heard of a Welsh Cabinet Minister? He (Mr. Osborne Morgan) had looked carefully through bygone lists, and, with the single exception of Sir George Lewis (who, though he sat for a Welsh constituency, was only a Herefordshire man), there did not appear to have been one since the time of Lord Chancellor Jeffries, who was not, it must be confessed, a very brilliant specimen of his nationality. He hoped the Scotch Members would excuse him if he said that Welsh Nationality was much more marked and likely to be more enduring than Scotch Nationality. They had a language and literature of their own; Scotchmen had only an accent, or, at most, a dialect. Not only so; but to judge from what was stated yesterday, the Scotchmen were not at all practically unanimous on the subject. As the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy said, the difference between Scotland and Wales was that Scotland had her own system of law, whereas Wales, in that respect, was amalgamated with England, of which it was politically a part. That was an argument more worthy of a lawyer than of a statesman. They did not want a separate system of legislation suitable to the peculiar circumstance of Wales. Thanks to an hon. Member behind him, Wales, some four or five years ago, obtained a separate Bill for closing public-houses on Sunday, and that Act was working so well that there were half-a-dozen English counties which desired that the same provisions should be applied to them. What did the proposition contain and the Resolution amount to, and what harm could it possibly do? There were five Welsh Bills on the Order Book standing for second reading, including two Intermediate Education Bills and one Land Bill. What harm could arise from referring them to a Committee on which the Welsh Members should be represented? It would have been a different thing if the House were asked to refer these Bills to Welsh Members only. There were 34 Members for Wales and Monmouthshire, and those 34 constituted exactly 1-20th of the whole House of Commons. They would, therefore, only be entitled to four Members, together with 15 "experts," in all 19, or about one-fourth. That number was not enough to swamp or override, though it might legitimately influence and instruct, on purely Welsh questions, English and Scotch Members, who were lamentably ignorant of Welsh language, literature, habits, and feelings. This was a very important question, indeed, for every day the general feeling was growing in the Principality that the English Members knew very little of Wales.

He had often heard it stated that owing to their infatuated ignorance of Welsh the English Members knew far more of the affairs of foreign countries than they knew of the affairs of this part of their own country. That was their misfortune, and not their fault. He could not help thinking that if some 30 or 40 English Members were taken from the opposite side of the House, mixed up together, and well shaken, so to speak, with 19 Members from Wales, it would operate as a salutary educational process in enabling them to rub off some of their ignorance. He had spoken of non-political questions; he hardly liked to refer to the burning question of Disestablishment. He knew the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General was quite ready to get up and say that he was letting the cat out of the bag; but he failed to see even on that question why it could not be discussed upstairs if their opponents appreciated it (as they doubtless would) with fair and open minds. After a time hon. Members might be brought to see, even on that subject, the error of their ways, and much useless friction and time might be saved the House of Commons. He thought the experiment was well worth trying. This was not a Home Rule question. On the contrary, it was a motion which was calculated to take off the whole edge of Home Rule, and, upon that ground, he ventured to claim the vote of every Unionist Liberal and Conservative who sat in that House. The hon. gentleman the Member for Dundee (Mr. E. Robertson) said, yesterday, that he did not want to see a one-horse Parliament sitting in Edinburgh. He (Mr. Osborne Morgan) did not want to see a one-horse Parliament sitting at Carnarvon. He did not think that any sensible Welshman, however strong a Home Ruler he might be with regard to Ireland, wished to see Home Rule established in Wales in the same sense. The House would, however, if they refused this Amendment, drive the Welsh people, as they had driven the Irish people before, in the direction of Home Rule. It was because he did not want Home Rule, and did not think that it would be beneficial to Wales, that he urged the House to accept the Amendment. What Wales wanted was fair play and justice, and they did not get it.

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the Question, to add the words "That there be another Grand Committee, similarly constituted, and subject to the same rules, the Members for Wales and Monmouthshire being Members of such Committee, for the consideration of all Bills relating to Wales which may, by order of the House, in each case, be committed to it."—(*Mr. Rathbone.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire) said, he thought he might, perhaps, be allowed to look at this matter from a general point of view, seeing that he was not a Welshman, although he represented a Welsh constituency. His knowledge of Wales was comparatively recent; but he would give the House the strong impression made upon him as to the necessity of getting a more true expression of Welsh feeling in that House. Since he had been a Welsh Representative, he had become aware of the existence of a very strong feeling in favour of special Welsh legislation among the indigenous population of the Principality, and he had come to sympathize more than he ever did before with the reasonable and earnest demands made by the people of Wales, who had hardly any voice in the Imperial Parliament until within the last few years. He agreed with his right hon. and learned Friend who had just sat down that Welsh Nationality was a very distinct and well marked fact, much more marked than Scotch Nationality, and he said so, though he (Mr. Smith) was a Scotchman himself. They were of a different race, with a different language, and possessing an ancient literature of their own, and local traditions, altogether different from those of the English people. They had also excellent qualities which differed in some respects from those of the English people. They were not without their faults, but all that they required was to have afforded them by the legislation of that House a more distinct expression of the reasonable demands of Welsh Nationality. He ventured to say that unless some expression was given to it, Parliament would find itself confronted with a growing demand for Home Rule for Wales. He agreed with his right hon. and learned Friend the Member for East Denbighshire (Mr. Osborne Morgan), who thought it was not desirable to feed that demand,

and that it would be much better to concede what Wales demanded without driving her into agitation for Home Rule, or encouraging a tendency towards separatism. The true way of complying with their demands was to give them a reasonable channel through which their opinions could be expressed in that House. He thought the proposal of his hon. Friend the Member for the Arfon Division of Carnarvonshire (Mr. Rathbone) contained a moderate and reasonable demand. If adopted it would make English and Scotch Members familiar with the points of view from which the Welsh Members regard Welsh questions; and, on the other hand, the Welsh Members would be able to count on the sympathy, support, and intelligence of a considerable section of the House. He spoke as one desirous of soothing down national asperities, and producing, as far as possible, a kindly feeling among all classes of the Welsh inhabitants. By refusing this moderate demand they would only drive the Welsh people towards separatism. There existed great suffering in Wales at the present moment. The land system of Wales was quite different from the land system in England. There existed in that country a great number of small occupiers, more like the small farmers in Ireland than the large farmers of England. They had been driven to the wall by high rents and hard times; and, certainly, the land system of Wales was such that it demanded a very different treatment from that of England and Scotland. A Committee of this kind would be able to place these questions before the House and the country; and it was, therefore, in the interests of peace and concord that he supported the very moderate proposal of his hon. Friend the Member for the Arfon Division of Carnarvonshire.

Mr. WHITBREAD (Bedford) said, he hoped the Members for Wales would excuse him for interposing for a moment in the debate; but he wanted to point out what the effect of the Amendment would be if it were carried. He thought it had been a little misapprehended and misunderstood by hon. Members. It was proposed to appoint another Grand Committee, similarly constituted to those already sanctioned. In order to avoid any mistake, he wished to point out that the Committee of Selection acting under that Order would, in the first place, make the new Grand Committee a strict miniature of the House, representing a due proportion of all Parties; and after that the Committee of Selection would be entitled to add 15 specialists, who, in the case of Welsh Bills, undoubtedly ought to be Members from Wales. What would be the effect of that? The effect would be that the Members for Wales would be at least five times as strong collectively on the Committee as they could be at any time in the House. It would give them an immense accession of strength in debate before a Committee compared to what they would have in the House. He hoped the House would not go away with the idea that the one thing desirable was to force the Bill through this Committee. The object of appointing Grand Committees was to relieve the House of too much Business, and was so to thresh out Bills that, when they came back to the House, there would be a reasonable prospect of their being accepted. He submitted to the House that, if this very moderate proposal were carried, and if they only had a Grand Committee with 15 specialists upon it, they would be able to shape any Bill in the direction of their own wishes, interests, and views. It would not, however, be desirable, in a Committee of that sort, that they should frame their Bills solely in reference to Welsh ideas and Welsh interests; but that they should so frame them as to get them accepted by the whole House. If that very moderate idea prevailed among Welsh Members, and he thought it did, he was lost in astonishment to imagine how the Government could bring themselves to oppose it. Such a Grand Committee would act only in the same way as an existing Standing Committee would act if Welsh Members were put upon it. What was the danger that the Government apprehended? He did see a very great danger looming before them. They had heard last night, and they had heard that day, that although the Scotch and Welsh Members were not desirous of Home Rule for Scotland and Wales, yet they were being pushed very fast in that direction, and it must be remembered that they were surrounded by eager spirits only too anxious to urge them and press them on in that direction. If the Government persisted in their point-blank refusal to consider this question—if professing, as they did, a great desire to listen to Scotland and Wales, they still refused the only practicable proposal ever made for giving a real hearing to the Members for Wales, then he could only say that they were seized with that dementia which they were told possessed those who were doomed to destruction.

COLONEL CORNWALLIS WEST (Denbigh, W.) said, that notwithstanding the admirable speech which they had just heard from the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread), he could perceive that any good result to Wales from adopting this proposal was very problematical. At the present moment a Committee sat every fortnight or three weeks, consisting of the Members from Wales, to discuss all Bills that were brought before the House, and he thought the Welsh Members ought to be satisfied if a proportion according to their numbers were added to the Grand Committees proposed by the Government. After the exhaustive debate last night on the Amendment of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell), he thought his hon. Friend the Member for the Arfon Division of Carnarvonshire (Mr. Rathbone) would have done wisely to have withdrawn his Amendment. If the proposal to have a separate and territorial Committee for Scotland was considered unnecessary, surely it was much more so in regard to Wales. They knew that the judicial system in Scotland was completely different; whereas the system of law for England and Wales was precisely the same. There was no difference either in regard to land tenure or anything else between Wales and England. Notwithstanding what hon. Members around him, who were not connected with Wales or possessed property there, but had only been invited to contest Welsh constituencies, might say, he had lived in Wales the greater part of his life, and he maintained that there was practically no difference whatever as to the tenure of land in the Principality and in England. He had been much surprised at the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow (Sir George Trevelyan) last night. The right hon. Gentleman laid down that local majorities should have complete control over local legislation. Such a principle would be fatal to our present Parliamentary system, and he could not conceive how, if it was to be carried out, the present united Parliamentary system could last, as they had hoped it would do, for a great many generations to come. What were the subjects to be committed to this Committee of Welsh Members? They were subjects of very great importance —namely, education, the land, and also the Church. He acknowledged that the question of education as applied to Wales might, to a certain extent, be different from that applied to the rest of the Kingdom; but in regard to the land and the Church, there were great principles at stake, and those great principles must be brought under the united consideration of the Parliament of this country. So far as the land was concerned, many wild propositions for dispossessing the owners of land in favour of those who had none were made. In regard to the Church there was the question of Disestablishment, to which he had always acceded; but there was another and more alarming proposal for the entire disendowment of the Church. Surely, questions such as those should not only be originated in the House, but be thoroughly threshed out there and nowhere else. It would be greatly to be deprecated if any legislative discussion should take place between Wales and England. It was because he believed that Wales was too provincial as it was, that he should prefer that instead of English Members going upon Welsh Committees, that Welsh Members should in proportion to their numbers join the Grand Committees of that House. For these reasons he was sorry that he was unable to support the Amendment of his hon. Friend, but he did not believe that its adoption would conduce to good legislation for Wales.

SIR HUSSEY VIVIAN (Swansea, District) said, he entirely agreed with what had fallen from his hon. Friend the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread). He believed the question, although in one sense a large one, was not a large one as affected the House. Let them see what it meant. The proportion of Welsh Members for Wales and Monmouthshire was about 25, and upon a Grand Committee that would give some four Members, or upon a Committee of 60 three Members. In the event of a Welsh Bill being committed to such a

Committee, no doubt the Committee of Selection would exercise their power by appointing 15 Welsh Members. Therefore, under ordinary conditions, 19 Welsh Members would be appointed on a Grand Committee which had to consider a Welsh Bill. He thought he was correct in that view. All they asked was that instead of 19, 34 should in point of fact be appointed—that was to say, that should a Grand Committee be specially appointed to consider any Welsh Bill, there would then be a difference of 15 in favour of the Welsh Members. Now, was it not worth while to make that small concession in order to meet the views, the wishes, and the feelings of the Welsh people? He thought the House and the Government would exercise a wise discretion indeed if they yielded to the desire of the Welsh nation in this matter. The Welsh people strongly desired to legislate for their own Welsh questions. They wished to have those questions fully considered and understood by the House, so that, if possible, they should be carried in the sense they desired to have them carried. The number of questions which were submitted to such a Committee would be very limited indeed. He understood that no question of religion could be submitted to a Grand Committee. He knew, of course, that upon that subject there was a wide difference between the desires and aspirations of the Welsh people and the desires of the majority of Members of that House, but there would be no danger, seeing that religious questions could not be referred to such Committees.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): Why not?

Sir HUSSEY VIVIAN said, he might be wrong, but he was of opinion that no religion question could be so submitted. First of all, there might be submitted questions relating to law, to Courts of Justice, and to legal procedure. So far as he knew, there was no desire on the part of the Welsh people to change in any way the law or the Courts of Justice, and the mode of legal procedure now adopted in reference to England and Wales. He was old enough to remember when they had Welsh Judges, and he remembered the joy which was occasioned when that system was changed and they received the benefit of the legal knowledge and acumen of the best Judges of the country. He was sure that no patriotic Welshman desired to go back to the day when the Courts of Justice would be different in Wales from what they were in this country. Then as to their shipping and manufactures, he could speak with some authority on questions of that kind, and he certainly never heard a desire expressed on the part of the Welsh people not to throw in their lot with England upon such matters. They knew it was to their best interests to do so. They might, however, wish to deal in their own way with measures affecting the agriculture and the education of their country. He had no desire to see a separate Parliament for Wales, although it was impossible to ignore the claims of Welsh Nationality. No harm could be done by conceding this proposal. It could do nothing but good; and he was bound to bear his testimony to the fact that a spirit of great irritation was arising in Wales, and he was anxious for the common interests of the country to see that spirit of irritation fairly met somehow or other. Now was the time to meet it, and he thought it would do much to allay that feeling of irritation which undoubtedly did exist if the Government would make the concession now asked for.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University) said, that it was with no little surprise that he found on coming down to the House that morning hon. Members engaged in the discussion of the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Carnarvonshire. He thought that in the exhaustive discussion which took place yesterday with regard to the case of Scotland, and the very plain expression of opinion on the part of the House which followed that discussion, that the hon. Member would scarcely have thought it worth while to inflict another debate upon the House on a cognate subject in regard to which every point was much weaker than the case put forward on behalf of Scotland. The first thing that surprised him was that the discussion had not been brought forward nor largely supported by what he might call "indigenous Welsh Members." It was proposed by the hon. Member for East Carnarvonshire, who would forgive him (Mr. Raikes) for describing him in that connection as "a happy accident," as he had no claim to call himself a Welshman either by birth or residence. It was supported by the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith), who was even less a Welshman than he (Mr. Raikes) was, and had only, by his own confession, become acquainted with Wales during the last two years. It was also supported by the right hon. and learned Member for East Denbighshire (Mr. Osborne Morgan), who, no doubt, was a Welshman by birth, and his neighbours were very proud of him, owing to the eminence he had obtained, although that had been outside the Principality. The right hon. and learned Gentleman had laid great stress on the importance of legislation for the Welsh-speaking people of Wales; but, as far as could be made out, the right hon. and learned Gentleman was not himself acquainted with the Welsh language. The question, if it were to be considered a Welsh one at all, should be left to those two or three Members who were able to express the feelings of the Welsh people in their own vernacular; and, in the probable event of the proposal being carried, he should move that no Welsh Representative should act upon the Committee unless he was capable of speaking the Welsh language. In that case, instead of 15, the number would be limited to three or four. They were told that 14 Scotch Bills were passed last Session; and it had been asked how many Welsh measures had been passed? He did not know precisely what number of English Acts were added to the Statute Book last year, but just as many were added for Wales as for England, because every English Act applied alike to England and Wales. It was a fallacy to suppose that no measures were Welsh measures unless their operation was confined to Wales. That was the mistake which underlay the arguments about Scotland yesterday, and which underlay most of the arguments addressed to the House to-day. The truth was that there were large districts of Wales that were essentially English in the character of their population. When the right hon. and learned Member for East Denbighshire asked whether a Welshman had ever been a Cabinet Minister, he almost immediately instanced the case of Sir George Lewis; and the right hon. and learned Gentleman himself had sat in a Government which was formed by a right hon. Gentleman who, though a Scotch Representative, was a denizen of Wales, and who had a right to know something of the feelings and wishes of the Welsh people. If there was any man who had the power and capacity to impress upon the House the opinions of the people of Wales, it was the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). They had been told that Wales had a literature. Had not Scotland a literature? There were few countries in the world which could point with juster pride to a literature of its own than Scotland. As to Wales, could the right hon. and learned Gentleman cite a single book written in the Welsh tongue which had obtained any reputation outside the Principality? He had spent many years among the Welsh, and appreciated their good qualities; he would not deny their literary faculty, but he believed that there were few Welsh literary remains, except some bardic fragments, which were not sufficient to constitute the title of a people to a national literature. He believed there was one bard in the House, and he had heard that the right hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Mr. Osborne Morgan) had recently taken a bardic degree; but up to the other day he was not able to address a Welsh audience in the bardic tongue. He believed the right hon. and learned Gentleman had recently been made an ovate—that was to say, a sort of acolyte in the bardic hierarchy.

MR. OSBORNE MORGAN: No; I modestly declined.

MR. RAIKES said, another argument had been used which proceeded on the assumption that the Welsh Sunday Closing Act had become so conspicuous a success, that it was becoming an object of envy in many English counties. As he lived in Wales, he could say that the information which, as a magistrate, he had been able to obtain was that the Act had been anything but a success. But he wished to point out that the bad example of now legislating with regard to that question on territorial lines had already become contagious, and that if matters relating to Scotland and to Wales were to be treated separately, the same separate treatment was even now demanded by Cornwall, Cumberland, Yorkshire, Warwickshire, and other places. Thus it had been demonstrated that you would practically abolish the principle of the same law and jurisprudence for the people of England, and separate your Legislature into a system of sporadic Parliaments, which would deal separately with different parts of the Kingdom, and give no consideration to the welfare of the country as a whole. It was said that there were four Bills which ought to be dealt with by a Welsh Committee—namely, two Intermediate Education Bills, a Land Bill, and a Bill securing access to mountains. With regard to the last Bill, it would hardly be necessary to establish the machinery of a Grand Committee for a measure of one or two clauses, which might be of an amusing character, and which the House would not be sorry to consider from that point of view. With respect to the Education Bills, they would be far better sent upstairs to a Select Committee, which would be largely composed of Welshmen, than to a Grand Committee which might be sitting without any Business during half the Session, and would be composed of a large number of Members not connected with Wales. He wanted to know why Monmouthshire had been dragged into this Amendment? It had been a part of England since the time of the Tudors. The reason why Monmouthshire was dragged in was, he supposed, because Wales had only 30 Members, and the additional four Members from Monmouthshire might enable the Principality to command a majority of 1 in a Grand Committee of 67. As to the Land Bill, it would be the duty of every Member of the House to familiarize himself with its details. Did anyone suppose that a Welsh Land Bill would be sent to a Welsh Committee? It had been stated that Wales had a different land tenure from England. Not at all. The land tenure of Wales was precisely the same as that of England, and when the hon. Member for Flintshire said that the Welsh landlords were aliens in race, religion, and language, he begged to inform the hon. Member that it was the Welsh Members who were alien in race, and that the Welsh landlords were in the great majority of cases identical with the Welsh people in race, and, as landlords, were among the best in Her Majesty's Dominions. It was said once by a great man that he could not draw an indictment against a nation. He (Mr. Raikes) thought that hon. Members opposite should be a little more careful with respect to the statements they made, and ought not, upon what they read in some third rate local paper, or from what they heard from local agitators, to brand with a stigma wholly undeserved a whole class of Her Majesty's subjects, the only result of which must be to embitter the relations between that class and those who had made the statements. The question of Disestablishment was only glanced at by the right hon. and learned Gentleman; but they had no doubt got the cat out of the bag; there was no doubt what was meant and desired by those who pushed this question upon the House. He was not speaking of hon. Members, but of those who were behind them; those agitators in the Principality who desired to see a separate tribunal for the consideration of Welsh Bills had, no doubt, the question of the Disestablishment of the Church in view. Now, it would be said, and said fairly, that this Amendment, if adopted, would not involve the question of the Church, because the House would not send a question of that sort to be dealt with by a Welsh Grand Committee; but if the question of land, and if the question of the Church, being important questions, were to be withheld from the consideration of the Committee, and if Bills dealing with intermediate education were Bills which would be very much better dealt with by an ordinary Select Committee, and if the Access to Mountains Bill was withheld from the consideration of the Grand Committee, what was left for the Welsh Committee? There was no case—there was not a single measure at the present moment before Parliament—which could be dealt with by this Welsh Grand Committee. The hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) said that the proposal was so moderate that he was lost in astonishment that the Government could oppose it. Lost in astonishment at the Government resisting a proposition which, if adopted, would upset the whole constitution of Parliament! This was a proposition to substitute for the judgment of Parliament the judgment of a little band of persons more or less under the control of local influences. Why, if any Government were to entertain a proposition of this sort as a moderate proposal, he did not know what the meaning of the word moderate was. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Whitbread) went on to say he thought that if the Government resisted this proposal it would only be because they were suffering from that dementia which led to ruin and disaster. The Government believed that if they were to accede to this proposal they would be open to such a charge. The hon. Member for Swansea (Sir Hussey Vivian) said one or two rather amusing things in regard to the sentimental aspect of the question, and he lamented, among other things, the extinction of the old Welsh Judges. He told the House that there were formerly three Judges for Wales, and he believed they were very good Judges. He (Mr. Raikes) had no doubt they were very good Judges, but the story which was current of them in the Principality was one which he might venture to narrate to the House. There were three of these learned gentlemen, and at one time one of the three was blind, one of the remaining two was asked how he got on with his colleagues, and he replied—"I have to do all the work, because my Brother So-and-So cannot see at all, and my Brother So-and-So always sees double." That was the condition of the judicial arrangements in Wales to which the hon. Baronet looked back with fond regret.

Sir HUSSEY VIVIAN said, he spoke in exactly the contrary sense; he had not risen before to stop the right hon. Gentleman because he saw the right hon. Gentleman had a nice little story to tell them.

Mr. RAIKES said, he was very sorry if he had misinterpreted the hon. Baronet. He certainly thought the hon. Baronet's argument tended in another direction; but he was now glad to find that the hon. Baronet did deprecate the separate system for Wales. Now, if this scheme were accepted, the hon. Baronet would withdraw any question regarding law as it affected Wales from the Committee which the House had instituted to deal with the question of law generally, and would confine it to the consideration of the Welsh Members. He was glad to find the hon. Baronet was not in favour of separate institutions for Wales, at least at present, because there was always the terrible hinting, the sinister foreboding on the part of the Welsh Members—"If you do not give us this, something much more terrible is likely to happen. You will have an agitation for Home Rule if you do not give us a Grand Committee for Wales." He (Mr. Raikes) expressed his own opinion, and he had no doubt it was also the opinion of his Colleagues, and of hon. Gentlemen who sat upon the Ministerial Benches generally, that if they were to accede to this proposition they would be beginning an agitation for Home Rule. The moment they recognized the principle which both the Amendments of last night and of to-day had sought to insinuate—namely, that this country was to be governed upon territorial lines, they sanctioned, it might be in a small degree, but they did sanction, the principle of Home Rule. They had had this proposal in former times before them in regard to Ireland; but Members from Ireland were far too shrewd to make it on the present occasion. Would not the country say that if Parliament once accepted the principle that the Imperial House of Commons was not a proper tribunal to deal with all the questions that came before it, but that questions of local interest should be remitted to tribunals of persons connected with localities—would they not say that the first premise of Home Rule had been sanctioned by the House of Commons; and would not the Separatist Party, when they had got an inch, be quite ready to take an ell? He did not believe that the House of Commons, elected as it was upon this distinct issue, that the authority of the Imperial Parliament was to be supreme, was prepared to entertain this insidious proposal. The interests of Wales were bound up with the interests of England, and the laws of the two countries were identical. If they were going to give up to another body the power of dealing with Welsh questions, they would enable the agitators in Wales to propound, or, at all events, to push to a certain degree, various nostrums respecting great principles which were not confined to Wales. Let them not forget the old adage, *Tua res agitur, paries cum proximus ardet.* When their neighbour's house was on fire, they would find it time to regret the folly which induced them to encourage him to keep a stock of fireworks and to send their fire engine away. If they were going to let their Welsh neighbour's house get on fire, the flames would very speedily spread and catch the adjoining domain. In this matter, while he was always glad to recognize a national sentiment in Wales, because he believed that everything which was patriotic, which was traditional, and which tended to make the people proud of their origin and history, served to lift and ennoble a race, he could not allow that because people had comparatively narrow traditions they should therefore be disinherited out of the great Empire of which they now formed a part. He would not consent, and he was sure the House would not consent, to any scheme by which the jurisdiction of the British Parliament was to be diminished or the frontiers of England to be curtailed. Long ago it was said, *Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari.* The Government's answer to that proposition was *Nolumus fines Angliæ mutari.*

Mr. J. ROBERTS (Flint, &c.) said, he desired very strongly to support the Amendment. He did not think that it was at all necessary to reply to the remark of the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) that no essentially Welsh Member had supported the proposition before the House. There was undoubtedly a growing sense of discontent in Wales at the manner in which the people considered the Welsh Business was neglected in the House of Commons, and he was sure that it would be a great satisfaction to the people to know that a Standing Committee to consider Welsh questions had been appointed. The appointment of a Select Committee could do no harm, because the House would retain its jurisdiction over whatever measures were examined and presented to it by the Committee. The right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General had alluded to the Welsh Sunday Closing Act, and had said it was a failure. He (Mr. J. Roberts) did not know that that had anything to do with this question; but, at the same time, he thought that the majority of the Welsh people, including a majority of the Welsh magistrates, considered the Act to be, on the whole, a great success. Certainly, if there was any defect in it, it was the abuse which was made of the *bonâ fide* traveller clause, and that could not be remedied in the present condition of things. He had received requests from all parts of the Principality to bring in an amending Act, but he felt it would be perfectly useless for him to do so in view of the difficulty experienced in passing the original Act. He trusted that the proposition now before the House would be accepted, and that the House would give the people of Wales an earnest that it would attend to the Business of Wales.

Mr. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire) said, he did not intend to follow the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) into his very inaccurate and ignorant gossip with regard to Welsh literature and judicature. He asserted, however, that no more frivolous reply to a moderate request was ever given by a responsible Minister in the House of Commons. The right hon. Gentleman occupied nearly an hour in narrating stories and in making more or less frivolous remarks about Welsh literature and judicature, scarcely touching the grievance his (Mr. T. E. Ellis's) Colleagues had laid before the House. The point which the supporters of the Motion insisted upon was that upon three or four great questions, which the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General very adroitly evaded, there was a distinct and growing public opinion in Wales—the question of education, that of temperance, and that of the relations between landlord and tenant. For many years the Welsh people had expected that the House of Commons would take up the question of education. Both last year and this year the Welsh Members had asked that the question of temperance and of the relations between landland and tenant should be dealt with, but the reply they had received was that the House could not find time to deal with Welsh questions. This Session, however, the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) had brought forward a series of Resolutions to amend this state of things, but private Members on both sides of the House admitted that the revolution which had been caused by the new Rules would result in further limiting the opportunities of private Members. The 12 o'clock Rule was an absolute death-blow to any hope of legislation on the part of private Members, unless there was a great devolution of Business through the means of Grand Committees. What was the principle laid down last night by the passing of the two Resolutions with respect to Grand Committees? It was that Members best fitted to deal with particular subjects should, in Committee, deal with those subjects. The claim of the Scotch and Welsh Members that Grand Committees should be constituted on which the preponderating element should be Scotch on the one and Welsh on the other, was quite on all-fours with the principle adopted last night. It was shown conclusively by Scotch Members last night that they could deal more efficiently and more thoroughly with Scotch Business than the rest of the House, and it was amusing to hear the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) say that he had exhausted all the resources of his rhetoric and oratory and logic in trying to excuse to his constituents the inability of the House to deal with Scotch questions. But Scotland was comparatively well off, for the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for East Denbighshire (Mr. Osborne Morgan) had pointed out that on two or three fundamental questions which vitally concerned the Welsh people the House had refused to give even a few hours' discussion. Take, for instance, intermediate education. Seven or eight years ago a Committee was appointed to inquire into the question. The Report of that Committee had been published for seven years. What did the Report say? That the present provision for intermediate education was thoroughly unsuitable and inadequate, and that it was only by a Bill dealing with the special circumstances and exceptional position of Wales that this defect could be remedied. Welsh Members had introduced Bills on the subject, and had repeatedly asked the House to give them a day for discussion, but what comfort did they get from the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General over and above his frivolous gossip? That the question should be referred to a Select Committee. But a Select Committee was denied them last Session, and he feared that if they asked this Session for a Select Committee the result would be the same. The right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General complained that only Englishmen had spoken and supported the Resolution. It seemed rather remarkable that every Englishman who had come to Wales and had come in touch with the people of Wales, men who had asked for the votes of Welshmen, should feel the urgency of this question, and should be the first to appeal to the House, and especially to the Government, to give more attention and respect to Welsh questions. The only serious argument which the right hon. Gentleman adduced against this Amendment was that the land system in Wales was similar to that in England and that, therefore, the Welsh ought not to have any special legislative treatment. The right hon. Gentleman was so inaccurate in his gossip respecting Welsh Judicature that he said that three Judges sat in three Circuits. As a matter of fact there were formerly in Wales four distinct Courts, two Judges sat in each Court, and the law was administered in an expeditious and cheap manner, but this was struck at by the reactionary Administration of Lord Sidmouth. It was generally admitted that if a few reforms had been adopted in Welsh Judicature law would have been carried out in a still cheaper, more efficient, and still more expeditious manner than it was in England. Assuming that the Welsh land system was now the same as the English, that was no answer at all to the complaint of thousands of Welsh peasantry. Their complaint was that they suffered, and that the landlords refused to meet their pressing circumstances at the present time. It was a mere mockery to the peasantry of Wales to set up a legal quibble as to the similarity of the two land systems. He begged the House to consider the very fair proposal which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) made a short time before he re-entered the Cabinet—namely, that—

> "We must do everything consistent with justice and honour to give the Irish Members of Parliament a special voice in the settlement of purely Irish questions, as for years past we have given to Scotch Members in the settlement of purely Scotch questions."

If there was any foundation for the complaint of the Scotch Members there was still more foundation for the complaint of the Irish Members, and there was still more for the complaint of the Welsh Members. He was sure that if the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol were appealed to privately he would allow this principle to operate in the case of Wales, as he wished it to operate in the case of Scotland and Ireland. He (Mr. T. E. Ellis) and his Colleagues appealed to all Members on the Opposition side of the House, and especially to hon. Members who paid respect to the opinions of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, to carry out with regard to Welsh Business the principle the right hon. Gentleman enunciated in the sentence—

> "I am distinctly of opinion that questions which are exclusively Welsh ought to be settled by the opinion and voice of the Members for Wales, and that is a principle which I hope will be steadily observed and pursued by the British Legislature."

The immediate way of applying this principle practically was by such a devolution of Business as was sketched out in the Amendment. The adoption of the Amendment would afford an opportunity for the discussion of Welsh questions, and would bring the House generally in touch with the demands and claims of Wales. It would do something else to lighten the burden, and the ever-increasing burden, of legislation upon the House.

Sir JOSEPH BAILEY (Hereford) said, that if the Division of last night meant anything, it meant that the House, by a very large majority, declined to sanction what he might call local devolution. To day they were asked to reverse that decision for reasons that had been given in the debate. What were those reasons? Why, that the House had declined to give a fair and proper hearing to Welsh questions. The right hon. and learned Member for East Denbighshire (Mr. Osborne Morgan) said, "We never get what we want;" but the right hon. and learned Gentleman's presence upon the seat opposite was a protest against the very words he had himself used. For many years the right hon. and learned Gentleman devoted himself to the advocacy of a question which he thought his compatriots desired to see settled, and there he sat on the Front Opposition Bench as a reward for his exertions, and successful exertions, in that matter. The Burials Bill was not exactly special legislation for Wales, but it was legislation which the Welsh people especially desired, and it was in connection with the passing of that Bill that the right hon. and learned Gentleman had gained his reputation. He called to the recollection of the right hon. and learned Gentleman and of Welsh Members generally that while they were about to discuss the question of Local Government for England that in Wales, so far at least as main roads were concerned, had been under the control of County Boards for the last 40 years. In that instance Wales was distinctly in advance of public opinion, and had had for 40 years advantages which were only now going to be given to England. Hon. Members had dwelt upon the small amount of legislation for Wales during the last Session. But it must be remembered that last Session was a very peculiar Session; they had to deal with questions of vital importance to the Empire; they had to deal with Parliamentary Procedure, and Irish questions of vital importance had to be at once settled. Neither Welsh questions nor English questions could receive the fair amount of consideration which Members from Wales and Members from England expected they should in an ordinary Session. At the same time, among the legislation of last Session he called to mind one piece of legislation—the Mines Regulation Act—which certainly was an Act which was likely, in the future, to be of the greatest possible advantage to that large and important section of the Welsh people who earn their livelihood by mining in coal and iron. Then there was the Welsh Sunday Closing Act. He did not know what magistrates on the border land between England and Wales, who had the licensing of English public-houses, might think of the advantages of the Act, but the fact that English public-houses close to Wales were the resort of a great number of Welshmen on Sundays for the purpose of drinking tended to show the great desirability of dealing with England and Wales as one, and not as two, countries. A great deal had been said about intermediate education in Wales. If he recollected aright, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield (Mr. Mundella) brought in a Bill some years ago dealing with Welsh intermediate education. If the Bill had been thoroughly discussed by the House, he (Sir Joseph Bailey) thought it would have been discovered that there was a vast amount of Welsh opinion opposed to the Bill. At the same time, when hon. Members spoke of Welsh intermediate education he should like the House to know that Wales was, at least, as well furnished with intermediate schools as England, and that seemed to him to show that there was no immediate necessity for special educational legislation for Wales. He believed that the greatest interest of Wales was that she should be brought more and more in contact with England. He certainly could not see that there was any reason why the House should be induced to depart from the righteous and sensible vote arrived at last night.

Mr. STUART RENDEL (Montgomeryshire) said, that after the conclusion arrived at last night, he and his hon. Colleagues were aware that the conclusion, in respect of the present Amendment was foregone. They watched the debate last night with great interest, feeling that their own fate was to be determined by the issue of that discussion. Nevertheless, they had thought it needful to present their case to the House as briefly as they might to-day, and, for his part, he should not have ventured to trouble the House at all had it not been for the remark that fell from the hon. Baronet the Member for Hereford (Sir Joseph Bailey). The hon. Baronet singled out as an example of the sufficiency of the attention to the wants of Wales, and as an evidence of those wants not being of a peculiar or pressing character, the case of intermediate education. The very ignorance of a Member living so close to the borders of Wales of the most practical question in Wales at the present moment seemed to be the best evidence in favour of the proposal now under discussion. The fact was that, so far from Wales in respect to intermediate education being in a satisfactory condition, the grievance was universally admitted by those who had any kind of acquaintance with the matter. The hon. Baronet had altogether forgotten the labours of the Parliamentary Committee presided over by Lord Aberdare. As a result of the inquiry by that Committee some attempt had been made, and made with great and marked success, to meet the demands of Wales with respect to higher education. Yet, so far as intermediate education was concerned, Wales was in a condition of absolute destitution. The serious need of Wales was that the gap between the system of elementary education and that of higher education should be filled up, and that the whole scheme of education should be one which would place Wales in a position to compete with England and Scotland. The lesson the House might draw from this singular exhibition of want of appreciation of the plainest truths in respect to Wales by an hon. Member like the hon. Baronet was, that the best results might be expected from bringing Welsh and English Members more closely together. The right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) had rather twitted Wales upon the fact of being represented by speakers who were of English birth. He (Mr. Stuart Rendel) could not think that the argument was one which told at all in favour of the right hon. Gentleman's contention—the fact seemed to point in quite an opposite direction. Who were the friends among the Welsh Members of such a measure as this? They were the Englishmen who had been returned for Welsh constituencies. Why were they such ardent supporters of this proposition? They had no predisposition for Wales; but they were simply honest friends to the cause of Wales, and they were now presenting their views to the House, because they thought that, as they themselves had been converted to the cause of Wales in this and in other matters, so they would be able to convert men of their own race to their own views. That he believed to be a very fair deduction from the argument adduced with a very different intention by the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General. The right hon. Gentleman was not contented with twitting Englishmen for speaking on behalf of Wales—he referred to a portion of the speech of the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith), but he did not quote it correctly. He spoke as if the hon. Member had said that the landlords of Wales were aliens to the people. He (Mr. Stuart Rendel) did not believe that that was the charge brought against the landlords of Wales under any circumstances. The landlords of Wales were unhappily very generally distinct from the people of Wales in their religion, in their language, and in their politics, and it was this line of cleavage to which his hon. Friend (Mr. Rathbone) referred. The hon. Member and his Colleagues wanted to close up the separation by such a healing measure as was now proposed. The right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General seemed to think that the case of Wales was distinctly weaker than that of Scotland. The weakness of the cause of Wales they admitted. Scotland had more than twice as many Members, and Scotland had a strong link with every Ministry which could be formed. He believed there was never a Ministry formed with less than six or seven Scotchmen in its ranks. Wales had no such advantages, no such link with any Administration. The difference in numbers told against Wales, because Welsh opinion was more completely swamped and submerged by the opinions of English, Scotch, and Irish Members in the House, than Scotch opinion by English, Irish, and Welsh opinion. He doubted whether the Metropolitan Members in combination would venture to place themselves as a body in distinct opposition to the Members from Scotland, but there was no question that with the greatest ease in the world any section worth naming in the House might, if they chose either from carelessness or ignorance or want of sympathy, drown the whole voice of Wales. Under these circumstances, and weak as they were in numbers, all they asked was that they should have an opportunity of legitimately combining—combining with English Members in forms which should receive the sanction of the House—to give some kind of official character to their position. The hon. and gallant Member for West Denbighshire (Colonel Cornwallis West) pointed to the fact that they had had a sort of informal Committee upstairs which had often had the advantage of his presence. He (Mr. Stuart Rendel) submitted that the existence of that informal Committee was to no inconsiderable extent an argument in favour of giving to some Welsh Committee a more distinct, legitimate, and recognized status. It did not appear to him wise on the part of the House, on the one hand, to recognize the reasonableness of these informal Committees, and, on the other hand, to refuse the suggestion that the Welsh Members should associate themselves in a reasonable manner with English and Scotch Members for the purpose of discussing with them questions which were essentially Welsh. Obstacles had been set up to their suggestion for the purpose of knocking them down. This Grand Committee would have nothing whatever to do but to deal with questions in a certain definite stage. The House would control both the entrance of a topic in the Committee and its exit. Nothing could come before the Committee except with the sanction of the House, and nothing could leave the Committee but upon the condition that it was again subject to the sanction of the House. He hoped, therefore, that the scope of their proposal would not be unfairly enlarged, or that they would be denied it upon grounds which were altogether irrelevant. Then there was the suggestion that, after all, what they were asking for was in the direction of Home Rule. He frankly confessed that he had great difficulty in making up his mind to agree to this proposal at all. He had felt there was some danger that the proposal would to some extent deprive Wales of what he believed to be her legitimate position. He thought that Wales, under any arrangements of this sort, ought to have a dominant voice on matters which were essentially Welsh, and he considered that, so far from this proposal being one favourable to the idea of Home Rule, it was distinctly the other way. It might be said that this was the thin edge of the wedge for introducing the question of Disestablishment in Wales. He had a very ardent sentiment with reference to that question, and he certainly would have been a very much more earnest and active friend of this proposal, and would have attached a far greater amount of importance to it than he had done, if he had thought it would have any favourable bearing upon the bringing to a speedy consideration and conclusion the question of Disestablishment in Wales. But he could see no kind of relevance between the question of this Standing Committee for Wales and the question of Disestablishment in Wales. He did not believe that anyone in the House desired to see any tendency towards grouping, which was probably the most dangerous enemy to the successful working of Parliamentary institutions which could possibly arise. He implored the House to consider the demands and claims of the Welsh Members from that point of view, and to see in it moderation, good faith, and an earnest desire not to carry their own views in spite of the House of Commons, but to carry their views by the reasonable and proper method of converting the majority of the House of Commons to the justice and fairness of their opinions.

MR. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport) said, he had listened with great attention to this debate, and it seemed to him that those who had spoken in support of the Amendment had not made out their case. There was a singular difference between the Amendment brought before them to-day, and that which they debated last night. Those who desired a Scotch Grand Committee proposed that those measures which related to Scotland only should be referred to that Committee, but the present proposal was that all the Bills which related to Wales at all should be referred to a Grand Committee if the House so ordered it. He (Mr. Sydney Gedge) was not at all surprised at the difference in the two Motions, because it was just possible that Bills might be passed with regard to Scotland which did not affect England, Ireland, or Wales, on account of the great peculiarity of Scotch law upon many points, especially upon the tenure of land. He did not think it would be possible to select Bills which related to Wales only, except such Bills as the Early Closing Bill. It seemed to him that the connection between the two countries or the two districts with two names was so exceedingly close that it would be impossible to pass any Bill relating to Wales which did not also affect England, and the only result of this Amendment would be that they might have a discussion upon every general Bill brought before Parliament as to whether, on account of its affecting Wales as well as England, it ought not to be referred to the Grand Committee in which Welsh Members were intended to have a preponderating influence. Those who brought forward this Amendment ought to have shown that there was something so peculiar to the 12 counties of Wales—that there was something so different, so peculiar, contrasting so greatly with the interests of the neighbouring counties of Cheshire, Shropshire, and Herefordshire, and indeed with all the rest of England, that there ought to be some special regard to the wishes of the people who happened to dwell in the Welsh counties. Besides, there was nothing in common between the agricultural and mountainous districts of Wales on the one hand, and the commercial and mining districts on the other. The interests of Glamorganshire were much more similar to those of Yorkshire and Lancashire and the mining districts of Staffordshire than they were to those of Merionethshire. Any Bills affecting the interests of the English counties he had enumerated ought to be referred with equal justice to a Grand Committee in which English Members had a preponderating voice, yet England seemed perfectly contented with its present position. Over and over again had the votes of English Members been overborne by the votes of Scotch and Irish and Welsh Members, but Englishmen had never dreamt of a territorial distinction such as that now suggested. The Eastern counties were purely agricultural; they had no mines, no manufactures, and little shipping, they felt the agricultural depression keenly, and thought themselves sacrificed to the manufacturing towns; but no one proposed that any Bills relating to them should be referred to a Grand Committee composed of their Members. Why should this be done in the case of Wales, whose only peculiarities were that it had a language which few of its inhabitants spoke or understood, and it also had a name of its own, and gave that name to the eldest son of the Monarch? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) had said that matters which were exclusively Welsh ought to be decided in accordance with the opinions of the Welsh Members. But the right hon. Gentleman had said pretty much the same with regard to Ireland and Scotland, but somehow or other, with regard to Ireland, the whole country did not see the matter in the same light as the right hon. Gentleman, and he had also told them that it passed the wit of man to define what were Irish matters. If the people were not disposed to accede to the principle in the case of Ireland, which was an Island separated from us by the sea, they were hardly likely to accede to it in the case of Wales, which was only separated from us by artificial boundaries which could be only discovered in the map. Then, again, no attempt had really been made to show that Wales had suffered from the present state of things, or that Welsh Members had not received a proper hearing in the House. So long as the counties and boroughs of Wales were represented by such able and pertinacious Members as those who had addressed the House to-day, Wales need not fear she would be left in the shade, or that her voice would not be heard. She had an equal chance with all other parts of the United Kingdom, and she could make her wishes known. Three subjects—namely, intermediate education, temperance, and the relation between landlord and tenant, had been particularly mentioned as deserving of attention, but it had not been shown that these questions affected the Principality any more than they affected England. Intermediate education was, no doubt, a pressing question at the present time, but if nothing was done for Wales in regard to it nothing was done for England. Temperance, too, was an important matter, but in respect to it more had been done of late for Wales than had been done for England. As to the relation between landlord and tenant, he believed the law was pretty much the same in Wales as throughout England. Welsh farmers were not suffering more from the agricultural depression than English farmers, and therefore the grievance was no more pressing in Wales than it was in England. The Government were about to introduce a Local Government Bill enabling the different counties, through their Representatives, to deal with county affairs. It had not been shown that Wales would not benefit equally under that Bill with England, and he certainly thought it would be time enough to make a Motion of this kind when it was shown that relief was given to English counties which was not given to Wales. The hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) had charged the Conservative Party with madness in the use they made of their majority to throw out this Bill, and had taken comfort in the thought of their impending destruction because of the Latin proverb—*Quos Deus vult perdere, prius dementat.* Such prophecies were the usual consolations of a dejected Party. He (Mr. Gedge) would retort another Latin proverb upon the hon. Member—*Victrix causa Diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.* But Cato did not console himself with such prophecies. The Conservatives had a majority; they looked upon it as a proof that the Gods regarded them with favour, and they intend to use it for the purpose for which it was given to them—to resist all insidious attempts, like this Bill, to break up the United Kingdom into fragments.

MR. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) said, he hoped the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Arfon Division of Carnarvonshire (Mr. Rathbone), who had moved the Amendment under consideration, would not hesitate to go to a Division. If he did go to a Division he would receive the unanimous support of the Irish Members who sat below the Gangway. This was a question upon which the Irish Members had the greatest possible sympathy with the Welsh Representatives. The Welsh Members had displayed the greatest sympathy with the movement in which the Irish were engaged, and it was only right that the Irish Members should note this opportunity of showing that they were prepared to aid Wales as much as they were able in her endeavour to get her Business properly considered. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Stockport (Mr. Sydney Gedge) put a very wrong issue before the House, because he said the last General Election was decided upon an issue like that raised in the Amendment before the House. The last General Election was fought upon the question of establishing a Parliament in Dublin. This was a question of establishing a small Committee for the purpose of enabling Welsh Members to have control of the affairs of their own country. Hon. Members like the hon. Gentleman appeared to think that the last General Election had given them a mandate to put down every movement which was hurtful to the instincts of the Tory Party.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, he felt he could add very little to the very able speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes), who, on behalf of the Government, replied to the observations which had fallen from hon. Members opposite; but there was something which ought to be put before the House in a more distinct manner than it had been as yet. Hon. Gentlemen proposed that there should be another Grand Committee similarly constituted to those which were appointed under the Standing Order of December, 1882, and subject to the same Rules—the Members for Wales and Monmouthshire being Members of that Committee. In the Amendment there was a contradiction in terms. Hon. Members said that this Grand Committee was to be similarly constituted to the Committees on Law and Trade. The Committees on Law and Trade were constituted by the Committee of Selection, who were instructed to have regard to the classes of Bills remitted to the Committees, to the composition of the House, and to the qualifications of the Members selected. Hon. Gentlemen would understand that the constitution of the Committee, having regard to the composition of the House, would render it impossible that all the Members from one locality could be put upon this Committee, and that, therefore, the proposal was a contradiction in terms. In the next place, it was proposed that all the Bills relating to Wales which might be so ordered by the House should be referred to the Committee. But every Statute passed for the United Kingdom related to Wales. Where was a line to be drawn?

Mr. RATHBONE: I have no objection to add the word "exclusively."

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, they were now getting at the root of the question. It was a question of referring all the Bills which related exclusively to Wales to this Committee. If all the Welsh Members were put upon the Committee, they could not, according to the practice of the House, sit upon either of the other Standing Committees. The hon. Gentleman asked for that which, if the Government were prepared to entertain this principle of disintegration and localization, would inflict great injury upon Wales, because it would divorce the Representatives of Wales from the influence they should properly exercise on the legislation for the United Kingdom as a whole, with which he believed the interests of Wales were as completely bound up as any other part of these Islands. The Government could not divorce the interests of Wales from the interests of England, Scotland, and Ireland. It appeared to him to be strange that it should be proposed from the Liberal Benches that they should localize the interests of the different parts of the country; that they should endeavour to separate one from the other, treating them as independent and separate units, and dealing with them as if they could have existence independently of this great Empire. He had heard with great surprise that even the interests of Wales would be benefited by being sent to a Committee upstairs instead of being discussed in the House. Some hon. Members had said it would be wrong to deny to Welsh Members the power of stating their case in the House. They did not deny the power to Members from Wales to take their place in the Imperial Parliament; but if they asked for a Committee upstairs as an alternative to stating their case in the House, he thought — with great respect to the judgment of the hon. Gentleman who moved this Amendment—they must wish to diminish the power of Wales. Looking at it from any point of view from which they could by any possibility regard it, the Government must oppose this proposal. Its adoption would be injurious to the interests of the Welsh themselves; it would reduce the position of Wales to that of a locality represented by 30 Members, and it would bring about a disposition to localize great questions of Imperial importance. The proposal could only be looked upon with favour by those who desired to bring about the disintegration of the Empire, and to set up a condition of things which would be most injurious to the interests of this great country.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 113; Noes 135: Majority 22.

AYES.

Abraham, W. (Limerick, W.)
Acland, A. H. D.
Anderson, C. H.
Asher, A.
Balfour, Sir G.
Barbour, W. B.
Barran, J.
Biggar, J. G.
Blane, A.
Bradlaugh, C.
Buchanan, T. R.
Burt, T.
Buxton, S. C.
Cameron, C.
Campbell, Sir G.
Campbell, H.
Carew, J. L.
Causton, R. K.
Chance, P. A.
Channing, F. A.
Clark, Dr. G. B.
Colman, J. J.
Conway, M.
Corbet, W. J.
Cossham, H.
Cox, J. R.
Craig, J.
Cremer, W. R.
Deasy, J.
Dillon, J.
Duff, R. W.

Ellis, T. E.
Esslemont, P.
Farquharson, Dr. R.
Fenwick, C.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro-
Flower, C.
Foley, P. J.
Fox, Dr. J. F.
Gill, T. P.
Gully, W. C.
Harrington, E.
Harrington, T. C.
Harris, M.
Hayden, L. P.
Hayne, C. Seale-
Healy, T. M.
Hooper, J.
Hunter, W. A.
Jacoby, J. A.
James, hon. W. H.
Joicey, J.
Kay-Shuttleworth, rt. hon. Sir U. J.
Kennedy, E. J.
Kenny, J. E.
Lalor, R.
Leahy, J.
Lewis, T. P.
Lyell, L.
Mac Neill, J. G. S.
M'Donald, P.
M'Donald, Dr. R.
M'Kenna, Sir J. N.
M'Lagan, P.
Mahony, P.
Montagu, S.
Morgan, O. V.
Nolan, J.
OBrien, J. F. X.
O'Brien, P.
O'Brien, P. J.
O'Brien, W.
O'Connor, A.
O'Connor, J.
O'Hanlon, T.
Parnell, C. S.
Portman, hon. E. B.
Potter, T. B.
Power, P. J.
Price, T. P.
Pyne, J. D.
Redmond, W. H. K.
Rendel, S.
Richard, H.
Roberts, J.
Roberts, J. B.
Roe, T.
Roscoe, Sir H. E.
Rowlands, J.
Samuelson, G. B.
Schwann, C. E.
Sheehan, J. D.
Smith, S.
Stack, J.
Stanhope, hon. P. J.
Stansfeld, rt. hon. J.
Stevenson, F. S.
Stewart, H.
Stuart, J.
Sullivan, D.
Sullivan, T. D.
Tuite, J.
Vivian, Sir H. H.
Wallace, R.
Wayman, T.
Williams, A. J.
Williamson, S.
Wilson, H. J.
Wilson, I.
Winterbotham, A. B.
Woodall, W.
Woodhead, J.
Wright, C.

TELLERS.
Morgan, rt. hn. G. O.
Rathbone, W.

NOES.

Acland, C. T. D.
Addison, J. E. W.
Ainslie, W. G.
Aird, J.
Baden-Powell, Sir G. S.
Bailey, Sir J. R.
Baird, J. G. A.
Balfour, rt. hon. A. J.
Baring, T. C.
Barry, A. H. Smith-
Bates, Sir E.
Baumann, A. A.
Beach, right hon. Sir M. E. Hicks-
Bigwood, J.
Bolitho, T. B.
Bridgeman, Col. hon. F. C.
Brookfield, A. M.
Bruce, Lord H.
Burghley, Lord
Campbell, J. A.
Carmarthen, Marq. of
Clarke, Sir E. G.
Coddington, W.
Corbett, A. C.
Corbett, J.
Corry, Sir J. P.
Cotton, Capt. E. T. D.
Courtney, L. H.
Crossman, Gen. Sir W.
Curzon, Viscount
Darling, C. J.
De Cobain, E. S. W.
De Lisle, E. J. L. M. P.
De Worms, Baron H.
Dorington, Sir J. E.
Dugdale, J. S.
Duncombe, A.
Dyke, rt. hn. Sir W. H.
Edwards-Moss, T. C.
Feilden, Lt.-Gen. R. J.
Fergusson, right hon. Sir J.
Fitzgerald, R. U. P.
Forwood, A. B.
Gathorne-Hardy, hon. A. E.
Gedge, S.
Gent-Davis, R.
Godson, A. F.
Goldsworthy, Major-General W. T.
Gorst, Sir J. E.
Goschen, rt. hon. G. J.
Gourley, E. T.
Gray, C. W.
Grimston, Viscount
Hamilton, right hon. Lord G. F.
Hamilton, Lord E
Hanbury, R. W.
Hardcastle, F.
Heath, A. R.
Heaton, J. H.
Herbert, hon. S.
Hermon-Hodge, R. T.
Hill, Colonel E. S.
Hoare, E. B.
Hoare, S.
Houldsworth, Sir W. H.
Howard, J.
Hozier, J. H. C.
Isaacs, L. H.
Jackson, W. L.
Jeffreys, A. F.
Jennings, L. J.
Johnston, W.
Kelly, J. R.
Kenrick, W.
Kimber, H.
King-Harman, right hon. Colonel E. R.
Lafone, A.
Lawrence, W. F.
Lewis, Sir C. E.
Llewellyn, E. H.
Long, W. H.
Lowther, hon. W.
Lubbock, Sir J.
Macartney, W. G. E.
Macdonald, right hon. J. H. A.
Mackintosh, C. F.
Maclure, J. W.
M'Calmont, Captain J.
Madden, D. H.
Mallock, R.
Matthews, rt. hn. H.
Maxwell, Sir H. E.
More, R. J.
Morgan, hon. F.
Mount, W. G.
Mowbray, R. G. C.
Mulholland, H. L.
Newark, Viscount
Noble, W.
O'Neill, hon. R. T.
Paget, Sir R. H.
Pearce, Sir W.
Pelly, Sir L.
Penton, Captain F. T.
Plunket, rt. hon. D. R.
Raikes, rt. hon. H. C.
Rankin, J.
Ritchie, rt. hon. C. T.
Robertson, Sir W. T.
Round, J.
Sellar, A. C.
Selwin-Ibbetson, rt. hon. Sir H. J.
Selwyn, Capt. C. W.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H.
Sidebotham, J. W.
Smith, rt. hon. W. H.
Stanhope, rt. hon. E.
Stanley, E. J.
Stephens, H. C.
Temple, Sir R.
Thorburn, W.
Tomlinson, W. E. M.
Trotter, H. J.
Waring, Colonel T.
Webster, R. G.
West, Colonel W. C.
Weymouth, Viscount
Wharton, J. L.
Whitley, E.
Wilson, Sir S.
Wolmer, Viscount
Wortley, C. B. Stuart-
Wright, H. S.
Wroughton, P.
Young, C. E. B.

TELLERS.
Douglas, A. Akers-
Walrond, Col. W. H.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, he wished to make an appeal to the hon. Member (Mr. Cremer), in whose name the next Amendment appeared on the Paper, not to press the Amendment, as its discussion could have but one result. The House was desirous of proceeding with the Orders as rapidly as possible. The debate on the Rules interfered with the privileges of private Members, and he was anxious to put a stop to that interference as soon as possible. He trusted the hon. Member would not proceed with the Amendment of which he had given Notice, as the result of his doing so would be to consume unnecessarily more of the time which should be at the disposal of private Members.

MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) said, he had no doubt the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury considered the statement he had made justified by the facts of the case; but it was not within his (Mr. Cremer's) memory that this question had ever been presented to the House in the form in which he proposed to introduce it, and, with all deference to the right hon. Gentleman, he considered the question of such importance that he must respectfully decline to accede to the request made. He would not, however, occupy the time of the House for more than 10 or 12 minutes, and there was no reason, so far as he and those who would vote with him were concerned, why the debate should occupy more than half-an-hour at the outside. The question involved in the Amendment of which he had given Notice was one of great importance to the masses of the people who were heavily taxed, too heavily taxed, in consequence of the mistakes which he believed had been made by successive Governments in dealing with questions of a foreign or Colonial character without referring those questions to the people, or considering their interests in regard to them. The questions to be relegated to the Grand Committees which the Government proposed to establish were of the most important character. Trade, Manufactures, Agriculture, and Law Procedure were, in themselves, questions of great importance; but, important as they might be, they were by no means as important—the whole of them, in fact, he considered of less importance—than the one which was involved in the Amendment he has submitting to the consideration of the House. As he had said, the question, so far as he was aware, had never been presented to the House in the form in which it was raised in this Amendment. It was quite true that two years ago the hon. Gentleman the Member for Merthyr Tydvil (Mr. Henry Richard) presented a Resolution — on which a vote was taken—somewhat akin to the Amendment he (Mr. Cremer) was now moving. The hon. Member's Resolution was to the effect that it was unjust and inexpedient to embark in war, or to contract engagements involving great responsibilities to the nation, or the addition of territories to the Empire, without the knowledge and consent of Parliament. He (Mr. Cremer) voted on that occasion in favour of the hon. Member's Resolution; but he did not now propose to go so far as that proposition. He did, however, think that the time had come when the people, through their Representatives in the House, should be more fairly consulted on questions of a foreign and Colonial character than they hitherto had been. He proposed that in this respect Parliament should become in reality what it was in theory—namely, the supreme tribunal which should have the supreme power of deciding on the questions to which he referred. What took place now? During the time he had been honoured with a seat in this Assembly he had kept his eyes pretty widely open, and had seen, from time to time, Members come down to the House having read reports in the Press that some disturbance had arisen between the Government of the day and some Foreign Power out of which mischief was likely to arise. Well, such Member came down, and very properly addressed a Question to the First Lord of the Treasury or the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; the Minister, of course, replied, and almost invariably urged the inadvisability of the Question being pressed, because the negotiations which were taking place were of that delicate character that it was not advisable they should be made known to the public, and the Questioner was urged not to insist on seeking further information on the point. The Questioner was, in fact, asked to wait for the publication of despatches and the issue of the Blue Book. Well, the Questioner generally acceded to the request of the Government, did not insist on the inquiry, waited for the despatches, and in due time they were placed in his hands—that was to say, the despatches which were intended for the public eye. He (Mr. Cremer) had heard—but he did not know what truth there was in the statement—that there were generally two sets of despatches between Ministers and our Representatives abroad, one of which was intended for the public eye, and the other of which was strictly private and confidential. They got one set of the despatches—that which was carefully prepared for the House and the public eye—presented to them, and on that they were supposed to form their opinions and arrive at certain conclusions;

but by that time the mischief had been done—the negotiations had been concluded and the Treaty had been made. He believed that scores of Treaties, in which were found the seeds of mischief and future strife between this country and other countries, had been negotiated and concluded in the manner that he had indicated; and then the Member who had addressed the Question to the Minister came down armed with the despatches and asked for further information, founding a complaint, or series of complaints, upon the despatches he had read in the Blue Book, and the Minister rose in his place and appealed to the hon. Member not to persist in making an inquiry, because what had been done could not be undone, and that, if an evil had been committed, it was too late to remedy that evil. And in this way the nation was committed irrevocably to the acceptance of a Treaty concerning the making of which its Representatives had never been consulted. Now, he thought the time had come when Parliament, or at least a Committee of the House, should be taken into the confidence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and should be consulted before negotiations were concluded with Foreign Powers, and when the opinion of Members of the House should be taken as to the desirability of concluding Treaties and negotiations of the kind to which he had referred. This principle was not by any means a new one; at least it was not new to the world, though it might be new to this country and to the House. The principle was in operation in the United States, where they had a Committee on Foreign Relations, and neither the Senate, nor the House of Representatives, nor the President, nor his Cabinet had power to conclude Treaties with Foreign Powers until the questions had been thoroughly threshed out by the Committee on Foreign Relations. The interests of the people of the United States were thus safeguarded by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, who sat with closed doors—and he commended this to hon. Gentlemen who might fear to support his proposal because of the publicity which would be given to the discussion of foreign affairs in the House or by a Grand Committee. The Committee on Foreign Relations in the United States sat with closed doors just as the British Cabinet did; and if his proposal were accepted, where negotiations of a delicate character were under discussion, and it was not desirable that they should be made known to the public, the Committee might sit with closed doors, and there would be little danger then of any difficulty arising in consequence of such discussions taking place in the Committee. Within the last few years they had had numerous instances afforded them of the danger of allowing the Government of the day or the Cabinet to determine these matters for them without, first of all, taking into its confidence the great Council of the Nation. He would only briefly refer to some, of the unfortunate events which had taken place during the past few years. There was the Afghan War, about which the House had never been consulted until hostilities had commenced. Then they had the Penjdeh dispute. He remembered a Vote being rushed through the House in two or three hours—he forgot which—for £9,000,000 or £11,000,000, because of the scare which seized upon our countrymen in consequence of that dispute. There was also the Transvaal War, the Zulu War, the War in Bechuanaland, the Egyptian War, and the War in the Soudan, which made shipwreck of the Government of the day. With regard to the Egyptian War, he felt convinced that if the facts had been laid before a Committee of the House such as he suggested—and which he was certain at some not very distant day would be appointed—the country would have been spared the shame and humiliation and everlasting disgrace of the bombardment of Alexandria, and the Liberal Government of the day would not have made shipwreck of its reputation. Then they had the war in Upper Burmah. He (Mr. Cremer) had listened to the debate last year, when the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), in opposing a protest which he (Mr. Cremer) had raised against the Burmese War, boasted of the part he had played in the affair, and said that the war would probably cost something like £300,000, and expressed the pride he felt at having added another gem to the Imperial diadem. Well, he (Mr. Cremer), on referring to the expenditure in India, found that there was a deficit—or would have been but for an increase of the Salt Tax, of something like £2,000,000—and that the greater part of the expenditure which caused the deficit was owing to that shameful annexation of Burmah. He did not think the people of the country cared for the purchase of gems to adorn the Imperial diadem at such a cost as this. Those who were anxious to have such gems should obtain possession of them at their own expense, and not come down on the poor taxpayers of this country, or the ryots of India, for the money to purchase such adornments. These wars had, from first to last, cost this country something like £100,000,000, and he had no doubt that the greater part of that would have been saved if the questions in dispute had been referred to a Committee on Foreign Relations of the kind that he now proposed. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House had stated just now that the fate this Amendment would meet with was a foregone conclusion. Well, it was not in the expectation that the House would agree to it that he (Mr. Cremer) had thought it his duty to bring it forward. He had brought it before the House because it was a democratic measure, and because it was in operation and had worked so admirably in the United States of America. He was satisfied that it would effect a considerable saving both in the treasure and blood of his countrymen if the questions out of which these miserable disputes arose were submitted to a Committee on Foreign Relations; and these were the reasons which had induced him to bring forward the proposition. He believed that those who had to pay both in money and blood had a right to be consulted with regard to the questions out of which these miserable conflicts arose. The idea of a Cabinet sitting with closed doors and deciding questions involving the honour of this country, and committing the nation to obligations of the most onerous description, seemed to him so monstrous, that it was a matter of surprise to him that the people of the country had so long submitted to such an extraordinary state of things. He might be told—they had been told before—that the House had the power of controlling the doings of the Government or the Cabinet; but what took place was this—if a Member questioned too closely the conduct of the Government, or if there was a restive feeling displayed by the Opposition, and the conduct of the Government was challenged, the Government immediately declared that if an adverse vote were recorded they would regard it as a Vote of Want of Confidence, and by this means many Members were induced, from Party motives, to vote in distinct opposition to their wishes and desires. When the debate took place in the House with regard to the annexation of Burmah, there were scores of Members who went into the Lobby in favour of the policy of the Government, but who were heard to assert—he had heard them himself—that had they been consulted by the Government, and had their opinions been asked and their votes recorded before the war was commenced, they would certainly have gone against the annexation of Burmah. But the mischief was done, money was in great part spent, the blood of the country was spilt, and then they were asked to endorse the action of the Government. It was to avoid, in the future, things of that kind and to give a Committee of the House an opportunity of judging of Foreign Treaties before they were entered into by this country—Treaties which contained the seeds of mischief and the germs of strife—that he moved this Amendment.

Amendment proposed.

At the end of the Question, to add the words —"That there be another Committee, similarly constituted, and subject to the same Rules, for the consideration of all questions of a Foreign or Colonial nature, and the ratification of Treaties with Foreign Powers."—(*Mr. Cremer.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) said, he had not come down to the House prepared to take part in this discussion; but he could not help feeling that the hon. Member who had moved the Amendment (Mr. Cremer) had the right sow by the ear. It had always seemed to him an extraordinary anomaly that, notwithstanding that they had Representatives of the people, there should be such a survival of ancient times that the power of making Treaties binding this country for all time by the most onerous obligations should still rest not in any degree with those Representatives of the people, but with the Crown, or, in other words, Her Majesty's Ministers. The proposal of his hon. Friend to establish a Grand Committee to deal with these questions was a more Radical proposal than any of the proposals submitted to the House on the previous evening and this morning; but, at the same time, though he had no hope that the Amendment would be accepted, he must say he thought his hon. Friend had made a movement in the right direction, and that in all other free countries there was reserved to the people some control over foreign relations. He was not sure that the House would consider the American example satisfactory, seeing that the assent of two thirds of the Senate was necessary to ratify a Treaty —as we were forcibly made aware at this moment in the case of a Treaty in which we were interested, and which was awaiting ratification.

Mr. MUNRO-FERGUSON (Leith, &c.) said, that no one would take objection to the first part of the hon. Member's Amendment, but it seemed to him (Mr. Ferguson) that serious objection would be taken to that part which dealt with the ratification of Treaties by Parliament. As to the example of America, which the hon. Gentleman who had moved the Amendment referred to, recent experience in the Senate there had shown the Rule in force to be of a somewhat unfortunate character. Recently a very important Treaty dealing with extradition had been laid before the Senate. It had been considered in secret Session—that method of consultation which had been recommended to the House—and the Senator for Virginia (Mr. Riddleberger) had enlightened us as to what had passed, and had given us the information that "the British lion's tail had been twisted by 24 votes to 21." At the present moment the question of ratifying the Fishery Treaty was in suspense in the United States, which would not have been the case had it not been for the Committee on Foreign Relations, for the Executive Government would have ratified it without hesitation. Amid the storms of Party politics it would be absolutely impossible to maintain any continuous form of foreign relations, if the action of the Executive Government was to rest on the chances of a Party vote in the House. If difficulties had arisen in America, which was a country with very few foreign relations, how much worse would it be in this country, which was so intimately associated with the politics of Europe, and which had such close relations with all the Governments of the world? This was not the first time that a debate had taken place on a question of this kind, the late Mr. Rylands having some years ago moved a Resolution affirming that Treaties with foreign countries ought to be laid on the Tables of both Houses of Parliament before being ratified. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), in opposing that Motion, had pointed out the impossibility of checking the details of negotiations by the direct action of the House, and had reminded the House that it might be necessary to conclude a Treaty during the Recess or the Easter or Whitsuntide holidays. He (Mr. Ferguson) had great sympathy with the desire of his hon. Friend (Mr. Cremer) that our foreign relations should have as full consideration as possible from the Representatives of the people, but, at the same time, he thought it absolutely impossible to accept the latter part of the proposal, and if the hon. Member put it to the House he (Mr. Ferguson) should vote against it.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.) said, that this question had been often brought before the House and decisively rejected, and although the speech of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cremer) had been conclusively answered by the hon. Member for Leith (Mr. Munro-Ferguson) it would be proper that he (Sir James Fergusson) should take some notice of what had been said, because there could be no doubt that the feeling expressed by the hon. Gentleman who introduced the Amendment was shared by many persons throughout the country who were, perhaps, not sufficiently instructed, and it was only right some answer should be given to such contentions. That the Representatives of a free country should have a voice—a commanding voice—in all that concerned national affairs must go without saying; but it was competent for the Representatives of the people to delegate their authority, and it might appear to Parliament, in its wisdom, that it was better to place confidence in the Ministers of the Crown for the time being with respect to the conduct of delicate affairs than to insist that the whole of the negotiations should be conducted and published before the world, a course which might prejudice the great interests at stake. Now, it must be evident that in a country with concerns so varied and extensive as ours, there must be questions constantly arising of a delicate nature which required to be conducted with expedition and firmness. But if all those questions had to be referred to a Committee of the House there would be inevitable delay, and it was possible that words might be said and decisions arrived at which would prejudice the objects the House had at heart. It was quite true that Parliament was the supreme tribunal, and ought to control the affairs of this country in every particular; but that was no reason why it should conduct those affairs in person. This House was no doubt the best exponent of the mind of the nation, but it might be a very unfit body for judical procedure or for diplomatic action. The hon. Member proposed there should be added—

"Another Committee, similarly constituted, and subject to the same Rules, for the consideration of all questions of a Foreign or Colonial nature and the ratification of Treaties with Foreign Powers."

But a Committee similarly constituted would consist of 60 Members taken from all parts of the House with due representation of every section, and he could not think that that would be a suitable tribunal to which all questions of a "Foreign or Colonial nature and the ratification of Treaties with Foreign Powers" should be committed. There might have been occasions in which this country had been led into responsibilities which would have been better avoided; but in how many cases had the country been saved from complications through the ability possessed by the Government of the Queen to conduct the negotiations in secret? There was no one who knew anything about foreign affairs but must know of negotiations which would have infallibly miscarried if they had not been conducted confidentially. He did not consider a Committee of 60 Members of average discretion a fit council to deal with these questions. As to the power possessed by the American Senate, the two cases of America and this country could not for a moment be compared, and when that parallel was attempted to be drawn on former occasions, it had absolutely broken down. The practice now proposed by the hon. Member (Mr. Cremer) might work well in America; but though we had much to admire in that country, we could not afford to imitate all her institutions. He believed, on the whole, that the abstention of Parliament had been productive of good results, and that it would require a good deal more than had been advanced by the hon. Member to-day to induce the House of Commons to depart from that long precedent and well-established rule.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 44; Noes 219: Majority 175.—(Div. List, No. 31.)

Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to*.

Resolved, That the Resolutions of the House of the 1st December, 1882, relating to the Constitution and Proceedings of Standing Committees for the Consideration of Bills relating to Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure, and to Trade, Shipping, and Manufactures, be revived, and that Trade shall include Agriculture and Fishing.

MOTIONS FOR BILLS AND NOMINATION OF SELECT COMMITTEES.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, he would now move the next new Rule which stood in his name on the Paper. The Resolution, he would explain, was designed to meet the difficulty which had been experienced by hon. Members who desired to introduce Bills and to propose Motions for the nomination of Select Committees. Since the operation of the Rule closing opposed Business at 12 o'clock, the courtesy usually extended to hon. Members who wished to bring up Bills had frequently been withheld. Objections had been made, with the result that hon. Members had been unable to move. It was not intended by his Resolution to give the Government power to introduce without explanation any Bill of great public importance. Obviously, Mr. Speaker would not permit a Bill which ought to be accompanied by an explanatory statement to be introduced in silence. It would, he felt sure, be acknowledged that private Members ought to be protected against a pernicious exercise of the power to object to the introduction of a Bill after 12 o'clock. It had been suggested in some quarters that there should be an extension of the new 12 o'clock limit;

but he believed that the general feeling of the House was opposed to any such change. He thought it, therefore, better to adhere, for the present at all events, to the existing Rule, but, if difficulties should supervene, and if it should be found that hon. Members were denied the fair privileges to which they were entitled, it would be for the House to reconsider the proposals which had been adopted. He hoped, however, that the Resolution which he now moved would meet the existing difficulty.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That on Tuesdays and Fridays, and, if set down by the Government, on Mondays and Thursdays, Motions for leave to bring in Bills, and for the Nomination of Select Committees, may be set down for consideration at the commencement of Public Business. If such Motions be opposed, Mr. Speaker, after permitting, if he thinks fit, a brief explanatory statement from the Member who moves and from the Member who opposes any such Motion respectively, shall put the Question thereon without further Debate."—(*Mr. W. H. Smith.*)

Mr. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.) said, he begged to move the following Amendment:—To leave out all after "That," and insert—

"Motions for leave to bring in Bills, which have passed through Committee of the Whole House, shall be exempted from the operation of the Resolution of 24th February, 1888 (Sittings of the House)."

The Amendment had the same object as that moved by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, but it seemed to him that it would meet the difficulty in a more regular way, as it was drafted on an analogy with a Rule which already existed in regard to terminating opposed Business at half-past 12 o'clock. Under his Amendment there would be no distinction between the case of a Motion made on a Tuesday or Friday and that of a Motion made on any other day, nor would there be any distinction between Bills introduced by the Government and Bills introduced by private Members. There was another point upon which he thought the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House was open to objection. The right hon. Gentleman had stated that his proposal would not apply to Government measures of great importance. Of course, it was obvious on the face of it, that measures of that kind would be introduced after a full debate—or, at any rate, after there had been a full statement as to their objects and full opportunity given to all sections of the House to express their opinions upon them. There was a further objection to the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman, and it was with regard to words contained in the last section of the Motion which stated that "Mr. Speaker, after a brief explanatory statement from the Member who moved and the Member who opposed might put the Question without further Debate." He thought that would be putting upon the Speaker a duty, a difficult and invidious duty, as it would leave it to him to determine what was the "brief explanatory statement" and what was not. It would require the Speaker to determine whether any statement whatever should be allowed or not. It must be quite within the knowledge of the House that opposition made to the introduction of Bills sprung from a spirit of mischief at a late hour of the night. There really was not, except in very few cases, anything like substantial opposition to a Bill, and he thought the practice of opposing Bills at this stage would be much less likely to be indulged in if this stage of Bills was exempted from the operation of the Rule of February 24. There might be much more delay occasioned by an hon. Gentleman insisting upon taking a Division on such a question at the commencement of Business when the House was very full than at the end of the Business when Members were anxious to get away. It was with a view of substituting another method of Procedure that he (Mr. Buchanan) had put down his Amendment. He had also included in his proposal Bills which had passed through Committee of the whole House. He had taken those words from the Standing Order relating to what was known as "the half-past 12 o'clock Rule." His desire had been to draft the whole of this proposed Rule on the analogy of the half-past 12 o'clock Rule, but he had been informed by Mr. Speaker that he would not be entitled to include all the words necessary in the Amendment. He would, therefore, move the Amendment, omitting the words "and Bills which have passed through Committee of the whole House." He confessed he abandoned those words with some reluctance, because they no doubt were privileges at present enjoyed and privileges of much greater importance to private Members than to the

Government. If the Government got a Bill through the Committee stage it was not difficult for them to pass it through its remaining stages; but, in the case of a private Member it was very different, and it was very hard that if a private Member progressed so far with a measure, that he should be prevented from carrying it by the action of a single Member.

Amendment proposed,

> To leave out all the words after the word "That," and insert the words "Motions for leave to bring in Bills, and for the nomination of Standing and Select Committees, shall be exempted from the operation of the Resolution of 24th February 1888 (Sittings of the House)."—(*Mr. Buchanan.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.) said, the Government were to be congratulated upon having foreseen and having attempted to provide for a great danger to the operations of the new Rule, because, undoubtedly, some danger had been evidenced during the past few nights. There had been an indiscriminate prohibition on the part of private Members against the introduction of Bills after 12 o'clock. If events of that kind took place frequently, and those sort of attempts were to be persisted in, no doubt it would be necessary for them to reconsider their arrangements as to the hours of adjournment, which they had, after much consideration, arrived at. Therefore it was that he thought the Government were entirely in the right, and were to be congratulated in their present endeavour to deal with that which was an obvious danger. As to that part of the new Rule which dealt with the introduction of Bills, he was entirely with the Government. There could be no doubt that the introduction of Bills was a purely formal matter, and he did not think that the House would ever be disposed in future to refuse its assent, or rather to debate at great length Motions for leave to introduce Bills. Nor did he find any fault with the power that the proposed Rule gave the Speaker to exercise his judgment as to the length of the debate upon a Motion for the introduction of a Bill. That was a matter which might well be left to the judgment of the Chair. But there was another question as to which he should be glad to hear opinions from greater authorities than himself—namely, the nomination of Select Committees. The system of nomination was a very curious one. It was done by the Whips on both sides. The Whips on each side ascertained from their Chiefs and by communication with those belonging to their Party who, in their opinion, would be best qualified to serve, and the Government Whip then nominated the majority, and the Opposition Whip the minority of the Committee. That system worked fairly well as far as the regular Opposition and the Government supporters were concerned, but not as regarded the interests of independent Members of the House. No one could assert that the composition of the Committee on the Army and Navy Estimates nominated last year was satisfactory to the great body of Members. It might have been satisfactory to the Treasury and the front Opposition Benches, but it was not satisfactory to those who had the interests of economy at heart. What would happen under this Rule if the nomination of a Select Committee gave rise to a debate? Obviously, he did not think that debate could be terminated. If it were, then the power of the Chair to prohibit debate would not preclude some section of the House from putting the House to the trouble of a Division upon every single name in the Committee. There was nothing in the Rule to provide for the Chair putting an end to the debate whenever it saw fit, nor was there anything to provide for the Chair expressing the opinion that the debate was of so important a character that it required more time than the House was then prepared to give it. He trusted that her Majesty's Government would give their careful attention to these considerations.

MR. W. H. SMITH said, he did not presume to say that this proposal would meet every difficulty which could be raised; but it was one which appeared to him calculated to meet most of the difficulties which arose from their having fixed an hour at which Opposed Business ceased. So far as the nomination of Select Committees by Government was concerned, those nominations would be put down for Government days, and if difficulties arose they must be surmounted either by the continuation of the debate, to the inconvenience and delay of other Business, or by the adjournment of the debate. He did not think any Rule could be made which would meet every difficulty which might be raised as to the nomination of Select Committees. At the present time the Government had the power of putting down Motions or Orders of the Day on the Paper for consideration in such order as they might think fit. Therefore, if the nomination of a Committee was likely to be opposed at half-past 3 o'clock, it would be for the Government to consider whether they would proceed with the nomination that day or adjourn it to another time. Then as to private Members' days—Tuesdays and Fridays—it would appear to be undesirable that hon. Gentlemen who had Notices of Motions down for those days should be prejudiced by lengthened debates on the introduction of Bills or on the nomination of Committees; but then came the question, Should private Members be deprived of the right of bringing in Bills and nominating Committees, which was usually granted willingly by the House? On the whole, he thought that the elastic terms of his Motion would accomplish the object which he had in view, and would do justice alike to the hon. Members who had Motions on the Paper, to the character of the House, and to the interests of the country. The hon. and learned Member for West Edinburgh (Mr. Buchanan) suggested another method; but that other method would break through the 12 o'clock Rule. He (Mr. W. H. Smith) hoped that the House would, by a species of moral pressure upon Members themselves, bring them to a full understanding of the duty which they owed to each other and to Parliament, and enable hon. Gentlemen to exercise those privileges which it was always understood that Members of the House possessed.

Mr. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) said, he thought that the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) had very fairly endeavoured to meet the difficulty that had already occurred in working the 12 o'clock Rule. As a matter of courtesy, private Members were usually allowed to bring in their Bills. They should at least give a fair trial to the 12 o'clock Rule, and not readily permit an infraction of it. The Business of the House would adapt itself to that Rule. It would save time if any three Members of that House could lay a Bill on the Table and have it read a first time as a matter of course without debate. In "another place" Bills were brought in and read a first time as a matter of course. As to the nomination of Committees, as he (Mr. Mundella) understood the Rule proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, two speeches could be made on the proposal of each name. The names had to be put to the House separately; and thus the nomination of the Committee became in fact a series of Motions. If that were to happen after 12 o'clock, as the hon. and learned Member for West Edinburgh (Mr. Buchanan) suggested, the House might be kept sitting to a very late hour. The Rule, as proposed by the Government, he thought met the immediate requirements of the case; and he trusted that they would give the new system a fair trial, at least for one Session.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) said, he agreed that the new Rule ought to have a fair trial, and that, whatever doubts there might be about its working satisfactorily, the time had not yet arrived even for ventilating those doubts. But his right hon. Friend and other Members were wrong in speaking of the 12 o'clock Rule. There was no 12 o'clock Rule; there was a 1 o'clock Rule; the arrangement come to was that the House should meet at 3 o'clock and should adjourn without Question at 1 o'clock. Opposed Business was to be stopped at 12 o'clock, and the understanding he thought was that the hour from 12 to 1 should be available for uncontested and routine Business. He was met with scepticism when he said that, unless certain words were introduced into the Rule, the practical result would be that the House would adjourn about five minutes past 12 o'clock. That had actually been the fact, and the proceedings which had taken place after 12 o'clock were not conducive to the despatch of Public Business. He wished to preserve the 1 o'clock limit for their Sittings, and did not want to break down the principle of adjourning the House at a reasonable hour. But hon. Members were sent there to do the Business of the country. That Business ought to be done; and if the course of procedure which had been followed in some instances was to be repeated every night at 12 o'clock, the Business of the country would not be done, and all legislation by private Members would be at an end. As to Bills being always brought in as a matter of course, that had not been the practice of the House. They all anticipated an interesting debate on the bringing in of the Local Government Bill. There was a debate on the introduction several Sessions ago of the Bankruptcy Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain); and they all remembered the great debate when the Home Rule Bill was brought in by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). Then with regard to the nomination of Committees, if a Committee consisted of 22 Members, there might be 22 Questions put from the Chair under the present proposal of the First Lord of the Treasury. Were there to be 22 explanatory statements? Their Rules ought, as far as possible, to be so framed as to work automatically, without imposing undue responsibility on the Chair. He was quite prepared to support the Government, and he thought that in their mode of dealing with the question they had hit upon a better solution than that proposed by the hon. and learned Member for West Edinburgh (Mr. Buchanan). He wished to point out to the House that it must be a question whether they would not abolish all half-past 12 Rules, and deal with Business as it stood on the Paper, without giving any man the right of stopping it. It was not fair or just to say that this power was being exercised by one section of the House only; objections had come from behind the Government, as well as from that side of the House, and it became one of those wars of reprisals which, in his opinion, lowered the dignity of the House of Commons.

Mr. BUCHANAN said, that as the feeling of the House seemed to be against his proposal, he did not intend to press it to a Division, although he considered that if adopted it would save the time of the House.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, that in order to meet some of the objections brought forward by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), he would move to omit the words "shall put the Question thereon without further debate" at the end of the Rule, in order to substitute the words "may without further debate put the Question thereon, or the Question that the debate be now adjourned." He was by no means certain that all difficulties would be met by this; but it was an attempt to deal with the question in a manner which he trusted would assist the House and hon. Members who had questions to bring before it.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "respectively," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "may without further Debate put the Question thereon, or the Question 'That the Debate be now adjourned.'"—(*Mr. W. H. Smith.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER said, he rose to express his concurrence with the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman opposite. He had been struck with the course which the Business had taken, especially on Monday night last, when all the Motions for Bills were opposed and leave was not obtained to bring them in. He thought it right that the Government should try to obviate this, because, if it went on, there would be an end to Private Bill legislation altogether.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, that with regard to what had been said as to reprisals, the Business after 12 o'clock had been of two kinds—namely, Motions for Leave and for Second Readings. He did not think any objection had been raised on that side of the House to the former; but there had been objections to the second reading of some Bills, because several of them were of such a nature that hon. Members on those Benches did not wish to see passed without discussion.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Words *added.*

Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to.*

Resolved, That on Tuesdays and Fridays, and, if set down by the Government, on Mondays and Thursday, Motions for leave to bring in Bills, and for the Nomination of Select Committees, may be set down for consideration at the commencement of Public Business. If such Motions be opposed, Mr. Speaker, after permitting, if he thinks fit, a brief explanatory statement from the Member who moves and from the Member who opposes any such Motion respectively, may, without further Debate, put the Question thereon, or the Question, that the Debate be now adjourned.

Resolutions (30th April 1869), read.

MORNING SITTINGS AT TWO O'CLOCK.

That, unless the House shall otherwise order, whenever the House shall meet at Two o'clock, the House will proceed with Private Business. Petitions, Motions for unopposed Returns, and leave of absence to Members, giving Notices of Motions, Questions to Ministers, and such Orders of the Day as shall have been appointed for the Morning Sitting.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING AT SEVEN O'CLOCK.

That on such days, if the business be not sooner disposed of, the House will suspend its sitting at Seven o'clock; and at Ten minutes before Seven o'clock, unless the House shall otherwise order, Mr. Speaker adjourns the Debate on any business then under discussion, or the Chairman shall report Progress, as the case may be, and no opposed business shall then be proceeded with.

SITTING RESUMED AT NINE O'CLOCK.

That when such business has not been disposed of at Seven o'clock, unless the House shall otherwise order, Mr. Speaker (or the Chairman, in case the House shall be in Committee) do leave the Chair, and the House will resume its sitting at Nine o'clock, when the Orders of the Day not disposed of at the Morning Sitting, and any Motion which was under discussion at Ten minutes to Seven o'clock, shall be set down in the Order Book after the other Orders of the Day.

WHEN CHAIRMAN REPORTS PROGRESS AT NINE O'CLOCK.

That, whenever the House shall be in Committee at Seven o'clock, the Chairman do report Progress when the House resumes its sitting.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, he believed hon. Gentlemen opposite would not desire to take away the interval between the Morning and Evening Sitting, which right the Government desired to preserve. He thought hon. Gentlemen would see that it was impossible to conduct the Business of the House without Morning Sittings more or less frequently towards the end of the Session, and even sometimes earlier. He was most undesirous of taking the whole Sitting, and it was exceedingly disagreeable to trench upon the rights of private Members. It was for these reasons that the Government had proposed the Resolution to which he asked the House to agree. In order, however, to make it clear that the House, after meeting at 9 o'clock, should not continue to sit till any hour, he was advised that it would be desirable to add these words at the end of the Resolution relating to the Standing Order of 30th April, 1869—

"That the House shall, unless previously adjourned, sit until One o'clock, a.m., when the Speaker shall adjourn the House without Question put, unless a Bill or Proceedings exempted from the operation of Standing Order 'Sittings of the House' be then under consideration. That the Business under discussion and any Orders of the Day not disposed of at One o'clock, a.m., do stand for the next day on which the House shall sit."

MR. SPEAKER said, he would first put the Question that the Resolutions of the 30th April, 1869, be made a Standing Order of the House, and the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury could then add his Amendment as a substantive Amendment after the word "Sitting."

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) said, the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury was that the House was to be put to extreme inconvenience in order to enable the Government to take the time of private Members by a side wind. In his (Sir George Campbell's) opinion the existing Rule of the House was better than the right hon. Gentleman's proposal. It would be extremely difficult to get a House at 9 o'clock. The right hon. Gentleman said, his object was to protect the rights of private Members. But, although by the Standing Orders private Members were to have at their disposal Tuesdays and Fridays, it had become the custom of the Government to take away more than two-thirds of the time to which they were entitled. He would prefer that private Members should have one night in the week rather than that their time should be taken from them in the manner proposed.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Resolved, That the said Resolutions be Standing Orders of the House.

ADJOURNMENT AT ONE O'CLOCK, A.M.

Resolved, That the House shall, unless previously adjourned, sit until One o'clock, a.m., when the Speaker shall adjourn the House without Question put, unless a Bill or Proceeding exempted from the operation of Standing Order "Sittings of the House" be then under consideration. That the Business under discussion, and any Orders of the Day not disposed of at One o'clock, a.m., do stand for the next day on which the House shall sit.—(*Mr. W. H. Smith.*)

Resolution of the 31st of May, 1875, read:

WITHDRAWAL OF STRANGERS.

That, if at any sitting of the House, or in Committee, any Member shall take notice that Strangers are present, Mr. Speaker, or the Chairman (as the case may be), shall forthwith put the Question, "That Strangers be ordered to withdraw," without permitting any Debate or Amendment: Provided that the Speaker, or the Chairman, may, whenever he thinks fit, order the withdrawal of Strangers from any part of the House.

Resolved, That the said Resolution be a Standing Order of this House.

Resolution of the 12th of March, 1886, read:

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS TO BE IN WRITING.

That Notices of Questions be given by Members in writing to the Clerk at the Table, without reading them vivâ voce in the House, unless the consent of the Speaker to any particular Question has been previously obtained.

Resolved, That the said Resolution be a Standing Order of this House.

Standing Order XIVA. (Closure of Debate) read, and amended by leaving out the first Proviso, lines 17 to 21 inclusive.

Standing Order XXI. (Notices on going into Committee of Supply) read.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, that under the present Rules, whenever Committee of Supply was the first Order of the Day on Mondays and Thursdays, and the House had gone into the Estimates, no Amendment could be made to the Motion for going into Committee on those days. That was an arrangement which had worked exceedingly well; but under the present conditions it was the view of the Government that smaller Government and Departmental measures might be taken on Mondays and Thursdays before the House went into Committee of Supply. It could then be arranged that Supply could be taken at a given hour. He thought hon. Gentlemen who had experience of the matter would agree that nothing was more inconvenient than to report progress at any particular hour, say nine or 10 o'clock, which would necessarily be the course to be pursued in some cases if the present Rule remained in force. This was particularly inconvenient when another hour would probably dispose of the Question before the Committee. The House had power to question the Government as to the time after which Supply would not be brought forward. That practice would still remain, and it might be generally observed with satisfaction to the House itself. He thought the Resolution he was about to move was one which the House would regard as necessary in order that the Business of the House might be taken with regularity and advantage.

Motion made, and Question proposed, as an Amendment to Standing Order XXI. (Notices on going into Committee of Supply), to leave out the words "the first," and insert the word "an."—(*Mr. W. H. Smith.*)

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.) said, he must own that the impression he had formed with regard to this proposal was not favourable. When Supply was set down as first Order on Government nights hon. Members had full notice of what was going to be discussed, and they came down ready to take part in the discussion; but if Supply was put down as the Second Order of the Day, not only would there be a further infringement of private Members' rights, but Supply would be brought on at a time when the great majority of Members of the House would have no notice of the fact. He could foresee that a Government at all clever—not to say artful—might use this Rule to run through several Votes when the House was comparatively empty, and without observation. He could assure the House that there was more in this Motion than met the eye, and as it was one which hon. Members had not had time to consider, he thought it ought not to be pressed at that moment. He would impress on the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House that Governments were but mortal; and the time might come when this Rule would operate against his right hon. Friend when he was occupying another position, which he would, no doubt, fill with the same ability as his present official position. He did not suggest that the Resolution would be taken advantage of by the present Government; but it was of the utmost importance that the House should be most jealous of any facilities given to the Government with regard to Supply, and he would, therefore, press upon the Government that it was desirable to reconsider this proposal in the interest, if not of themselves, of the House and the country.

Sir CHARLES LEWIS (Antrim, N.) said, he entirely agreed with the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, who had pointed out that there were very substantial reasons why this amendment of the Standing Order should not be made. He (Sir Charles Lewis) would prefer that there should be greater certainty as to when Supply would be reached, so that there should be time for hon. Members to consider the Business, and come down prepared to take part in the discussion of the Estimates.

The CHAIRMAN of COMMITTEES (Mr. Courtney) (Cornwall, Bodmin) said, this proposal had been characterized as one which would extinguish the powers which the House had of examining and controlling the Estimates. But he did not think the noble Lord appreciated either the difficulties proposed to be met or the effect of the proposed alteration. As far as his experience at the Home Office and the Treasury went, and as the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington would be aware, there were a variety of small Bills useful in themselves, and which had been approved by successive Governments, and to the practical completion of which there was no objection. There were minor Bills of a non-contentious character which every Government desired to carry, but which could not now be proceeded with after 12 o'clock if any Member rose and objected to their being taken. How then was this difficulty to be met? The proposal was that such Business should be put down on Monday and Thursday. It would be perfectly easy to limit the time for the discussion of these Bills, say till 6.30 or 7 o'clock; and any Member could move at the appointed time "That the Question be now put." The objection of the Noble Lord was that the House might be tricked by the Government, who might spring Supply at a moment when the House was very thin, and in that way get through the Votes without discussion. No doubt that was possible, but it would not be a wise game for a Government to play. Again, if Supply were the third or fourth Order, the Question would be asked at what hour would the Government take Supply, and the probable reply would be that Supply would not be opened after 7 o'clock or some such time. There would be no difficulty in carrying out the Rule, because the Leader of the House might stop the Business before the House by moving "That the Question be now put;" so that there would be no difficulty in the matter in spite of the suspicion which animated the Noble Lord the Member for South Paddington and the hon. Gentleman the Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell). He (Mr. Courtney) thought the Government could be trusted to act fairly in this matter, and as the proposal appeared to be the only way out of the difficulty they were trying to get rid of, he should support the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman.

Sir ROBERT FOWLER (London) said, he certainly thought that it was part of the scheme of the Government that Bills should be taken until a quarter to 1 o'clock. If the present practice with regard to private Members' Bills continued, there would only be one course open to the Government—they would have to put these Bills down for Morning Sittings on Tuesdays and Fridays, and the result would be that the rights of private Members would be greatly curtailed. As an instance of the effect of the present Rule, he referred to the way in which the India Railways Bill was dealt with a few nights ago. He conceived that this was a Bill for the discussion of which the Government would have to find an opportunity, especially as it was originally introduced by the late Ministry, and the only opportunity they would have would be by putting it down for a Morning Sitting.

Question put, and *negatived;* word *inserted.*

Standing Order, as amended, *agreed to.*

Standing Order XXII. (Select Committees) read and amended by leaving out, in lines 1 and 2, the words "on Wednesdays and other Morning Sittings of the House."

Sir UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH (Lancashire, Clitheroe) said, the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury would see that under Rule 35 the proceedings of Committees were null and void if they went on during prayers. He would, therefore, save the House some inconvenience, and at the same time achieve the object in view if he agreed to leave out from the Standing Order the words "except while the House is at prayers."

Amendment proposed to Standing Order XXII. to leave out the words "except while the House is at prayers."—(*Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the said Standing Order."

MR. W. H. SMITH said, the right hon. Baronet proposed in effect to alter Standing Order XXXV., and he (Mr. W. H. Smith) thought it desirable that formal Notice of that proposal should be given. Although he admitted that a good deal was to be said in favour of the proposal, yet there was also something to be said on the other side. For instance; he pointed out that unless Members were at prayers they could not secure seats in the House. It might be that the pleasure of the House would be to make some alteration in the Standing Order in the direction indicated by the right hon. Baronet, but as the proposal of the Government was necesssary for the purpose of facilitating the Business of the House, he trusted the Amendment would not be pressed.

SIR JOSEPH BAILEY (Hereford) said, the right hon. Gentleman would see that he had endeavoured to deal with this question of private Committees in a subsequent Resolution on the Paper. He sincerely hoped the House would allow private Committees to sit from a quarter before 12 in the forenoon and continue until half-past 3 in the afternoon, notwithstanding the Sitting of the House, and that his right hon. Friend would consider his proposal.

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) said, it was quite impossible for hon. Members to retain their seats unless they were present at prayer time, and previously placed their hats on the seats they intended to occupy. He asked the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House whether he could not give Members some assurance that at a subsequent period the Governmen would frame a Rule by which Members engaged on Private Bill Committees would be able to retain their seats with less inconvenience. If the House afforded sufficient accommodation for all Members, the present Rule would not be necessary, but under existing circumstances he thought some regulation [should be made to meet the difficulty he referred to.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Standing Order XXXVI. (Orders of the Day and Notices of Motion) read, and amended by leaving out, in line 6, the word "Orders," and inserting the words "Business, whether Orders or Motions."

Standing Order XXXVIII. (Orders of the Day and Notices of Motion) read, and amended by inserting, in line 3, after the word "Orders," the words "or Motions."

Resolved, That the Resolutions of this House of the 24th, 28th, and 29th days of February, and of the 7th day of March, relative to the Business of the House (Rules of Procedure), with the exception of Resolution No. XII., be Standing Orders of this House.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That Standing Orders Nos. III., IV., V. (Wednesday Sittings), VI., VII., VIII (Morning Sittings), XI. (Debates on Motions for Adjournment); XIII. (Irrelevance or Repetition), XIV. (Putting the Question), XXXIX. (Dropped Orders), XLI. (the Half-past 12 o'clock Rule), and XLIV. (Divisions), be repealed."—(*Mr. W. H. Smith.*)

Amendment proposed to leave out "XLI. (The half-past 12 o'Clock Rule)."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, he hoped his hon. and learned Friend would not press this Amendment. It was obvious that the half-past 12 o'clock Rule was practically obsolete, because hon. Members had no power of moving Opposed Business after 12 o'clock, although it was hoped that no unnecessary opposition would be made to measures that were not open to serious objection.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

Resolved, That Standing Orders Nos. III., IV., V. (Wednesday Sittings), VI., VII., VIII. (Morning Sittings), XI. (Debates on Motions for Adjournment), XIII. (Irrelevance or Repetition), XIV. (Putting the Question), XXXIX. (Dropped Orders), XLI. (The Half-past 12 o'Clock Rule), and XLIV. (Divisions), be repealed.

STANDING ORDERS.

Resolved, That the Standing Orders of this House relative to Public Business, as amended, be printed.—(*Mr. W. H. Smith.*)

MR. W. H. SMITH said, that all the Rules proposed by the Government having been agreed to, it was not his intention to ask the House to proceed with the discussion of the Rules of which Notice had been placed on the Paper by private Members. The first of these stood in the name of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler), who, he was sure, would not think him wanting in respect to himself or other Members if he left their proposals to be brought forward in the time which belonged to them—[Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER assented.]

MR. HOWORTH (Salford, S.) said, with the indulgence of the House he should like to make one or two observations with regard to a Notice he had placed on the Paper.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) rose to Order. He had given way on the understanding that the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury would move the Adjournment of the Debate. If the Debate were not adjourned, with regard to which he thought there was an honourable understanding, he should claim his right to move the Motion in his name.

MR. W. H. SMITH said, he was under the impression that he had practically moved the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. W. H. Smith,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

SIR JOSEPH BAILEY (Hereford) said, he wished to point out the extreme inconvenience of the Rule passed with regard to Private Bills in Committee. At the present time the House sat at 3 o'clock. The effect of the Rule was to reduce the time at the command of Members of Committees from four hours to three.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I move that the Question be now put.

MR. SPEAKER: There is no Question that can be at this moment properly put.

SIR JOSEPH BAILEY said, the consequence of the reduction of the number of hours during which Committees upstairs could sit would be to throw greater expense on the suitors. Unless some alteration were made, great inconvenience would be caused to them and to private Members. He did not think the House should part with this subject until it had received further consideration.

Ordered, That the further consideration of the New Rules of Procedure be adjourned till *Monday* 19th March.

MOTIONS.

—o—

NATIONAL DEBT ACTS.

RESOLUTION.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I beg to give Notice that to-morrow I shall move that this House on Friday next at 2 o'clock resolve itself into a Committee to consider the Acts relating to the National Debt, when my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will make a statement and will move a Resolution. I mention Friday at 2 o'clock, because I observe that the hon. Member for Northampton has a Notice upon the Paper of a Motion in which I believe many hon. Members below the Gangway opposite take great interest. Therefore, I propose to have a Morning Sitting for the discussion of a question which is of very great urgency indeed, as the procedure will require the passing of a Bill before the Easter holidays, and Friday is the latest day on which it can be introduced in fairness to the various interests concerned. At the Evening Sitting the hon. Member for Northampton will have an opportunity of raising a question of great importance, and the Government will do their best to keep a House on that evening.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): Does the right hon. Gentleman merely intend to give Notice now that he will make the Motion which he has indicated to-morrow?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I will make the Motion now.

Committee to consider of amending the Acts relating to the National Debt (Queen's *Recommendation* signified), upon *Friday,* at Two of the clock.—(*Mr. W. H. Smith.*)

RATING AND VALUATION (SCOTLAND).

Ordered, That the Select Committee do consist of Seventeen Members:—The Committee was accordingly *nominated* of,—Mr. Baird, Mr. John Blair Balfour, Mr. Barbour, Mr. Joseph Bolton, Mr. Caldwell, Dr. Cameron, Sir Archibald Campbell, Sir Charles Dalrymple, Mr. Hugh Elliot, Sir Archibald Orr Ewing, Mr. Hunter, Colonel Malcolm, Mr. M'Ewan, Mr. James Robertson, Mr. Shaw-Stewart, Mr. Mark Stewart, and Mr. Edmund Robertson:—With power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT.

Ordered, That a Committee of Six Members of this House be appointed to join with a Committee of the House of Lords to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament.

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords, to acquaint their Lordships, That this House hath appointed a Committee of Six Members to join with a Committee of the Lords to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament.

Ordered, That Mr. Childers, Viscount Lymington, Sir Algernon Borthwick, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, and Mr. Jackson be Members of the said Committee.—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

House adjourned at Twenty minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 8*th March*, 1888.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*Second Reading*—Liability of Trustees (24); Trust Companies (7), *negatived.*
Report—Mortmain and Charitable Uses* (33).

ARMY—ROYAL BARRACKS, DUBLIN—INSANITARY CONDITION.

QUESTION.

Earl BEAUCHAMP asked the Under Secretary of State for War, whom he saw in his place, Whether he could give the House any information with respect to any knowledge which Her Majesty's Government might possess in reference to the condition of the barracks in Dublin other than the Royal Barracks; and whether any other Reports besides the Reports referred to the other day had been made with regard to those barracks?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Lord Harris), in reply, said, that he was not aware of any other Reports having been made upon the barracks in Dublin other than the Royal Barracks, besides the Report which was made in 1883, and also the Report which was made by his noble Friend his Predecessor in the War Office in 1886. In consequence of those Reports certain alterations had been carried out in the other barracks in Dublin. In the Pigeon House Fort Barracks, of which a report was made in 1886, a hut was built capable of accommodating 40 men. In the Ship Street Barracks £1,000 had been taken in the Estimates last year, and had been spent in improving the officers' quarters, and £500 had been taken in the Estimates this year as his noble Friend had reported bad drainage there. In Beggar's Bush Barracks no complaint had been received as to the drainage. In Island Bridge Barracks £5,000 had been taken in the Estimates last year for improving the officers' quarters, and £6,000 had been taken in the Estimates for this year to carry out certain alterations, the drainage having been made good in 1887. In the Richmond Barracks £1,000 had been taken in the Estimates for drainage last year, and £1,000 for improving the sergeants' quarters, and £1,000 had been taken in the Estimates for drainage this year, as well as £1,000 for the sergeants' quarters; £1,200 had been taken for improvements in the Royal Artillery Barracks, Phœnix Park. The general condition of Portobello Barracks was considered satisfactory.

LIABILITY OF TRUSTEES BILL.

(*The Lord Herschell.*)

(NO. 24.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

Lord HERSCHELL, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, it was introduced at the instance of the Incorporated Law Society, who had devoted much attention to this subject. It was intended to relieve trustees from some of the liabilities to which they were now subject, and to remove disabilities under which they at present laboured. The measure was one of detail, and did not involve any general principle—each provision was to be considered by itself. There could be no doubt that trustees had long suffered under burdens which most of them considered very grievous, and anything that could be justly and properly done to give them relief would have a sound and wholesome effect. In fact, the liability of trustees for acts perfectly innocent in themselves had been pushed to such a point that it was often difficult to get persons to act in that capacity at all. The first provision of this Bill was very simple. This Bill, proceeding on the lines of the Conveyancing Act of 1881, which did not apply to trustees, would enable a trustee to appoint a solicitor to be his agent to receive and give a receipt for money on behalf of the trustee. It often happened in cases when it was desired to effect a sale on satisfactory terms that it became necessary to insert certain restrictions in the conditions of sale, which were known as "depreciatory conditions." But as the law at present stood, trustees could not insert "depreciatory conditions," and an impediment was thus placed in the way of their obtaining as much as they otherwise would if they were ordinary vendors, and often, when it was sought to enforce a particular sale, a person was enabled to get out of his bargain by alleging that the trustees sold under conditions which a trustee could not insert. It had been held that a trustee was not justified in advancing trust money on house property to more than one-half of its value, while on landed property he could advance to the extent of two-thirds of its value. But there did not seem to be any substantial reason for thinking, in these days, that house property was more subject to fluctuation than landed property, and the present restriction placed a difficulty in the way of trustees securing good investments. This Bill proposed to place house property and other landed property on the same footing. At present a trustee could not buy or lend without obtaining a "full title." This Bill proposed to enable a trustee to dispense with a full title, where the title appeared perfectly sound and good without it. It was decided in a particular case that a trustee, in obtaining a valuation of the property upon which he intended lending, was bound to obtain the assistance of a surveyor carrying on his profession in the neighbourhood of the property. That was a very inconvenient restriction, and the Bill provided that if a trustee employed a surveyor of skill that was sufficient. Another provision of this Bill enabled a trustee to employ an agent to perform certain work under the trust, even though it was work that the trustee was mentally and physically capable of performing. At present a trustee could not charge anything for his own services, and could not employ any one else for reward to do anything which he was himself capable of doing. The consequence was that he was often put to considerable expense and inconvenience. It did not seem unreasonable that he should be allowed in certain cases to employ an agent. The last provision in the Bill was the most important of all. It enabled a trustee to plead the Statutes of Limitation in certain cases. At present an ordinary defendant was entitled to meet any claim against him by setting up the Statutes of Limitation, unless where fraud was proved. But at present, however innocent the breach of trust on the part of the trustee might have been, no lapse of time barred the right of the *cestui que trust.* A trustee might have taken the opinion of the most eminent counsel, who might have advised that the trustee was entitled to do certain things; but it might turn out by a decision delivered 50 years after that the trustee was not entitled, and had committed a breach of trust. This Bill provided that a trustee should be entitled to the benefit of the Statutes of Limitation, save where he had been guilty of fraud, and where the money had actually come to his hands. It did not seem reasonable that trustees more than other persons should be liable to stale claims where they had been guilty of no fraud or misconduct. He begged to move the second reading of the Bill.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Herschell.*)

Lord FITZGERALD said, he thanked the noble and learned Lord for introducing a Bill dealing with this important subject. Some of its provisions he entirely approved; but others, he thought, touched dangerous ground, and would require very careful consideration. He objected to valuers being substituted for trustees, and also to the clause alterating the law in regard to the

Statute of Limitations. He would suggest that the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY) said, he admitted that there were many provisions of the law relating to trustees that might be improved, and there was no doubt that the law operated harshly in some cases; but it ought to be borne in mind that nobody was compelled to become a trustee, and that a trustee took upon himself the duty of protecting the interests of others. He thought it would be unwise to encourage trustees to think lightly of their position and to entitle them to put forward their own neglect of duty as a shield against liability. If a trustee neglected for a long period to perform the duties which he had voluntarily undertaken, surely he ought not to be permitted to plead his wrongful inaction in order to avoid liability. The Statutes of Limitations, he might point out, were passed not to protect people against the consequences of bygone transactions, but with a view to diminish litigation, and on account of the perishable nature of human evidence. It was thought undesirable that a man should be called on to prove that he had paid a debt six years ago. He did not wish that their Lordships should reject this Bill; but he agreed with the suggestion of the noble and learned Lord who had just spoken that it ought to be referred to a Select Committee, who would be able to examine it minutely and settle its phraseology.

LORD HERSCHELL said, he could not agree that no man need be a trustee against his inclination. The statement was, no doubt, true in a certain sense; but it left out of sight the important consideration of moral necessity. He should not be unwilling to refer the Bill to a Select Committee if its main principles were accepted. He understood, however, that the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack opposed the important principle that there should be a limit of time, and he therefore thought that the opinion of the House ought to be expressed on the point.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY) said, that laymen did not regard this question precisely in the same way as lawyers. Some of the doctrines of the Lord Chancellor sounded harsh in their ears. For his part, he thought it would be very desirable to have all the legal knowledge they could command upon a subject which so closely affected Members of that House, and that could only be properly obtained by sending the Bill to a Select Committee. The present state of the law as to trustees wrought real hardship. In his experience he had not been impressed with the truth of the Lord Chancellor's axiom that no one need be a trustee against his wish.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2ª accordingly.

TRUST COMPANIES BILL.—(No. 7.)

(*The Lord Hobhouse.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

LORD HOBHOUSE, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, it was very similar to the measure which was read a second time in their Lordships' House towards the end of last Session. If the Bill were received with favour it would be easy to refer it to a Select Committee. The existing law as to trustees was such that there was discernible an ever increasing unwillingness to undertake a trustee's responsibilities. It was quite true that people might have recourse to their solicitors, but there was considerable objection to solicitors acting as trustees. Even if the trust should be properly constituted, trustees were liable to all the changes and chances of life. They became too busy to attend to the affairs of the trust, and disgusted at the importunities which were put upon them, they refused to act any longer; they went abroad; they fell ill; and they got old and died. These things often necessitated a change of trustee, and with every change there was the same trouble which occurred in the selection of the original trustee. Then there were the expenses attending the transfer of the trust funds, and he might say that a very large proportion of the disasters which happened to trust funds were brought about at the moment when they were passing from hand to hand. He did not pretend to say that the administration of trusts by Corporations was likely to be perfect; but he thought that a great many of the disadvantages in the case of individuals which he had enumerated would be avoided, and that a large number of people would think it well worth their while to pay for the advantages which such a Corporation would offer. He referred to, but would not quote at length, the authorities on this subject which on a former occasion he quoted, but he wished to add the authority of Mr. Justice Kay. In giving judgment on a case which came before him, Mr. Justice Kay said he had long been of opinion that the present law relating to trustees required to be reformed, and he was glad to find that there were commercial gentlemen who were willing to come forward to undertake trusts for proper remuneration. He had the authority of Mr. Justice Kay to state that the Bill now before their Lordships would bring about a reform such as was required. Although quarrels had taken place between owners of trust funds and Trust Companies, and had come before the Judicial Committee, they had not heard it alleged malversation or failure to make good the whole of the trust fund had ever taken place. The principles of the Bill were practically carried out in the United States. Trust Companies had been very successful there, and were reckoned amongst their soundest institutions. It was impossible to have a change in the system of this country without a change in the law. For one thing, the law must be altered to enable trustees to receive pay without express instructions on the part of the founder of a trust, and also to enable Corporations to undertake a number of functions devolving on trustees. It was the object of this Bill to make the necessary changes. It was necessary that precautions should be taken that the persons who held themselves out to undertake trusts should be responsible persons, and that they should conduct their business with the requisite degree of control and of publicity. The Bill, therefore, provided that Corporations might fill the position of trustees, and might make charges for their services; and they also required a subscribed capital of £100,000, of which £50,000 should be invested in the Chancery Division of the High Court in the name of the Paymaster General, an annual audit of accounts, and the annual publication of returns. Some objectors thought it would be better to have official trustees; but, for his part, he would be glad to see both an official and company systems at work. At all events, Companies might be allowed to try their hands; and if they succeeded their success would be a public boon. He moved that the Bill be read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Hobhouse.*)

Lord SUDELEY said, he had always taken a great interest in this subject, and as connected with a large Corporation which had undertaken the duty of trustee in the manner proposed under the Bill he wished to say a few words. The position of private trustee had undoubtedly of late years become more and more onerous, and the personal liability attached to it had become so great by recent decisions that no reasonable man in the present day would undertake a large trust without, to say the least, considerable hesitation and dread. Unfortunately, in this country the custom had grown up among friends of acting as unpaid trustees one for the other, and it was most difficult to refuse. In all new countries, where this feeling—of a somewhat sentimental character—existed only in a modified form, Trust Corporations had been formed and were doing the work of trustees in a most satisfactory manner. In the United States, where this method existed on a large scale, Trust Companies were looked upon as some of the soundest institutions; and this was also the case in the South African Colonies, in New Zealand, and in Victoria. In this country the proposal to perform the duties of trustees by means of Public Corporations was a great innovation; but the liabilities of private trustees had become so unbearable that he apprehended there could be no doubt a very strong feeling existed in the country that trusts must be administered by official and public bodies. Under the present system, when trustees died or changes were necessary, the expenses involved were considerable; whereas by means of a Corporation the trust never died. The noble and learned Lord who had introduced the Bill had done good service, for there could be no doubt if we were to have public bodies performing these duties it was of the most urgent importance that they should be strong, thoroughly well-managed, and have such considerable reserves as to render them absolutely secure and properly able to fulfil the office of trustee. It was clearly the duty of the State to see that this matter was put on a sound footing, and to facilitate, as far as possible, the carrying out of this principle. The Bill, while it dealt with the matter generally in a fair and right spirit, was open, he thought, to very grave criticism in many of its clauses. Under the law as it was at present he understood there was no difficulty in new trusts being undertaken by Corporate bodies, and they could be appointed as executors to wills, provided that was done by means of officials for the time being connected with the Company. What was required by that Bill was to enable existing trusts to be taken over by Public Corporations, as that could not now be done unless they were allowed legally to bear the necessary expenses. It was also right under that Bill that stringent regulations should be made to insure that Corporations dealing with both future or existing trusts were sound and properly supervised by some Government Department. Under the Bill, in Clause 12, it was proposed that there should be a subscribed capital of at least £100,000, and that £50,000 of it should be invested in the Court of Chancery. He thought that clause was a very important one. No doubt they must oblige Trust Companies to be large and responsible, and he doubted whether a capital of £100,000 was anything like large enough for Corporations dealing with interests so large and important. As regarded the investing of £50,000 away entirely from the control of the Company for an indefinite period, however great their reserves might become, he thought that was open to criticism. As he understood the matter, in America the reserves at the disposal of the Companies were kept under their control, subject to sufficient Government supervision, as was done with our old insurance offices, and he thought there could be no harm in that; but he doubted whether they could lock up a large sum of money and place it entirely away from the control of the Company. All new insurance offices were obliged to deposit £20,000, pending the accumulation of a certain reserve, and that seemed a fair principle. That was a question, at any rate, which eminently required to be threshed out in a Committee. Again, in Clause 13, power was given to the Board of Trade of far too wide a character. They must have stated times for inspection, and not enable any Department to be constantly prying and interfering in the business of the Corporation. In Clause 16 it was proposed to make it possible for the Company to work jointly with the co-trustee. He doubted whether that would be found practicable. In Clause 19 a provision was made which he ventured to say would make that Bill quite nugatory and unworkable, and crush on the head all enterprise in that direction. It was proposed to make directors and manager of the Company personally liable. The result of that certainly would be that it would be absolutely impossible to obtain any responsible people to connect themselves with those Trust Companies. Surely what they wanted to do was to encourage people of position and responsibility to help in the working of those Companies, and to make the Companies themselves as strong as possible by means of large uncalled capital, and the formation of considerable reserves; and the very worst thing they could do was to attach personal liabilities to the people connected with them. Clause 20 was, he apprehended, impossible to work. They could not, in a Trust Company, state their maximum charges, as the circumstances of trusts were so different that they must, if the business was to be conducted properly, have a scale capable of variation.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY) said, he cordially concurred with his noble and learned Friend who had introduced the Bill that there was an existing evil which ought to be remedied, and he thought they would all agree that there was an absolute necessity for providing in some way for the due performance of trusts. His noble and learned Friend, however, did not seem to be aware that there was a Bill in the other House, to constitute a State Trustee, and he was doubtless aware that it would shortly be his (the Lord Chancellor's) duty to ask their Lordships to assent to a Bill for the amendment of the law relating to Joint Stock Companies. Her

Majesty's Government had before their consideration at this moment the question whether it would not be their duty to suggest the appointment of Public Trustees, by which persons would take upon themselves, under a public guarantee, the performance of trusts. Therefore the most appropriate and convenient course would, he thought, be not that the present Bill but that the subject should be referred to a Select Committee, and that the debate on that Bill should be adjourned until that Committee had reported. Until the decision of that Committee had been arrived at, it would be very undesirable to affirm one way or the other what should be done in regard to that Bill. In the one event it might be their duty to oppose its further progress, in the other to support it. If the noble and learned Lord consented to the course he had suggested, and allowed the debate to be adjourned in the meantime, it would be his duty to move for a Select Committee on that subject, and on the advisability of appointing either a Public Trustee or of giving a certain number of Limited Companies the power of acting as trustees.

Lord HERSCHELL said, he was sorry that his noble and learned Friend objected to the second reading of that Bill. The proposal to appoint an Official Trustee was one which he had himself long advocated; but he thought that the two subjects were essentially distinct. He wished to see an Official Trustee appointed, and he would also like to see those Companies enabled to act as trustees for those who desired them to do so. He himself should object to that Bill if it proposed to enable existing trustees at their pleasure to turn over to any persons they pleased the trust with which they had been invested. But it proposed nothing of that kind. It would provide that any person by his will might appoint a Company to be his executor. If a person wanted to do that, why should he not be permitted to do it? The main powers of that Bill were simply enabling. Supposing a testator preferred to go to a Company instead of to an Official Trustee, why should he not be at liberty to act on his preference? The clause of the Bill might be open to criticism; but the House was only asked to affirm the principle of the measure on the second reading. In the United States many of these Trust Companies were very powerful Corporations, and they worked to the complete satisfaction of the public. If persons desired to use that machinery for giving effect to their wills or their settlements, he thought they should be permitted to do so. While he was in favour of the appointment of Official Trustees, he should be sorry to regard it as an alternative scheme to the one contained in the Bill. He did not see why both should not work together. He should be still more sorry to see that question mixed up with the reform of the law relating to Joint Stock Companies. He therefore hoped that his noble and learned Friend would not object to the second reading of the Bill.

Lord FITZGERALD said, he thought no one could object to the principle of the Bill; but he would suggest that the Bill should be read a second time, and that his noble and learned Friend should consent not to proceed further with the measure until the Select Committee had reported.

Lord HALSBURY observed, that he would not oppose the second reading provided the noble and learned Lord would not proceed further with the Bill until the Select Committee had reported. It was possible that the Select Committee might be compelled to object to the Bill going any further, because they might prefer to have an Official Trustee appointed.

Lord HOBHOUSE said, he declined to accept the suggested arrangement.

Lord HALSBURY said, that under the circumstances he should think it his duty to move that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

The PRIME MINISTER and SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of Salisbury) said, he thought the noble and learned Lord opposite would act more wisely if he would either consent to suspend proceeding with the Bill after the second reading, until the result of the Committee's deliberations was made known, or else agree to an adjournment of the debate.

Lord HERSCHELL suggested that the Bill, when it had been read a second time, might be referred to the Select Committee.

Amendment *moved,* to leave out ("now,") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months.")—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

On Question, Whether ("now") shall stand part of the Motion?

Their Lordships *divided*:—Contents 31; Not-Contents 41: Majority 10.

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Bath, M.
Salisbury, M.

Mount-Edgcumbe, E. (*L. Steward.*)
Bathurst, E.
Beauchamp, E.
Brownlow, E.
Doncaster, E. (*D. Buccleuch and Queensberry.*)
Gainsborough, E.
Harrowby, E.
Milltown, E.
Onslow, E.
Rosslyn, E.
Stanhope, E.
Waldegrave, E.

Cross, V.
Sidmouth, V.

Armstrong, L.
Balfour of Burley, L.
Basing, L.
Brodrick, L. (*V. Midleton.*)
Clements, L. (*E. Leitrim.*)
Colchester, L.
de Ros, L.
Elphinstone, L.
Foxford, L. (*E. Limerick.*) [*Teller.*]
Hylton, L.
Kenry, L. (*E. Dunraven and Mount-Earl.*)
Kintore, L. (*E. Kintore.*) [*Teller.*]
Knutsford, L.
Lyveden, L.
Macnaghten, L.
Norton, L.
Wemyss, L. (*E. Wemyss.*)
Wigan, L. (*E. Crawford and Balcarres.*)
Zouche of Haryngworth, L.

Resolved in the *negative.*

Bill to be read 2^{a} on *this day six months.*

POOR LAW RELIEF.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

THE EARL OF ABERDEEN, in rising to call attention to the present system of Poor Law relief, especially with reference to the apparent inadequacy of those systems to cope effectually with the distress recurring from time to time among large numbers of unemployed persons in the Metropolis and other populous places, and to move that a Royal Commission or a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the subject, said, that on seeing the Notice he had placed upon the Paper, perhaps the first reflection which suggested itself to the minds of noble Lords was that there had been several inquiries into kindred subjects of the Poor Law, and that reflection might be followed by a misgiving whether an inquiry at this moment would be of practical use. He hoped to show that at present there were certain aspects of the matter which were of a most serious character, and with regard to which some action ought to be taken. As to previous investigations, there had been none since 1878. He did not intend to enter into any explanation of the legislation on the subject. He would merely say that there had been various amending Acts of Parliament; but in the main the present law was based upon the legislation of 1834 and 1835. He had no desire to attack the administration of the Poor Law by the Local Government Board. On the contrary, so far as he had been able to observe, that Board displayed very considerable skill in conducting the course of their administration along the somewhat difficult path of exercising central supervision. Still, it was to be noticed that many powers and regulations which existed were allowed to remain inoperative in consequence of the diversity of administration in different Unions. In one Poor Law district certain regulations were carried out, while in another they remained a dead letter. There was, for instance, great variety in regard to outdoor relief. Probably their Lordships would agree that the extension of the system of outdoor relief was not to be encouraged, and that it led to many abuses. Cases of abuse were not now so frequently heard of as formerly; but not long ago an Inspector told him of a

Poor Law Guardian who, when it was pointed out to him that the giving of outdoor relief on the scale which his Union was adopting was calculated to have the effect of reducing wages, frankly answered that the rates were so heavy that he did not see why they should not get some of them back in the way of reduced wages. In the Metropolis there existed the utmost diversity in the giving of outdoor relief. In one district there were 952 persons receiving outdoor relief, while only 1,845 were in the workhouse. In another there were 1,612 persons in the workhouse and only 43 persons receiving outdoor relief; while in a third, with 2,537 persons in the workhouse, there were as many as 4,860 receiving outdoor relief. This difference was perfectly astonishing. Great diversity also existed in different districts as to the labour test and as to boarding out of children. No doubt the advantages of that system were very great. The effect on children of workhouse bringing up must be very injurious. He was well aware that boarding out required anxiety and the greatest care; and he believed in regard to a matter of this importance they should obtain useful information by means of a Royal Commission or Select Committee. There seemed, also, to be great uncertainty in the minds of the officers as to their actual powers, and the consequence was that there appeared to be as great a divergence between the practice of one relieving officer and another as if they were acting under different laws. That the present system was inadequate to meet the emergencies of depressed times, might be judged from what took place at the beginning of 1886 and from what happened in the present winter. We were now passing through a period of distress which brought the weak points of the machinery into prominence, and the experience so obtained ought to be utilized, and defects which became apparent should be remedied. At the beginning of 1886 there were considerable disturbances and complaints of want of work, and an earnest appeal issued from the Mansion House was successful in obtaining a vast quantity of money for the relief of the distress. The distribution of that money led, he thought, to a great deal of demoralization. Why did the public subscribe it? Because they believed that the Poor Law administration was not adequate to meet the emergency. During the present winter there had been another agitation and outcry against the want of work, and though the meetings of the unemployed had been suppressed, it could scarcely be supposed that the distress had passed away. The Returns of the Poor Law Board, no doubt, showed a great diminution in the number of persons applying for relief as compared with former years; but that was to be accounted for otherwise than by a diminution of distress. Charity had been more organized, and a large and increasing number of people would not resort until the very last extremity to the poorhouse. This fact was in some degree corroborated by the correspondence that had passed between Poor Law Guardians on the one hand and the Vestries on the other. The former said there was no abnormal distress, because the numbers in the poor-house were not abnormal; while the Vestries pointed out that hundreds of men were applying to them for work. There had been a great deal of incredulity as to whether the number of unemployed was so large as had been represented; but the number was undoubtedly very large. This was to some extent shown by the crowds of men who were ready to work for 1*s.* a-day in yards that had been opened by voluntary efforts to meet the distress; there were large bodies of men seeking work and unable to find it. The noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury), in replying to a deputation a few days before the Session began, said—

> "I must express my own confidence that any attempt on the part of the State to step into the place of the ordinary employer, and to establish a relation between it and the working classes similar to that between the employer and the employed, would only result in the long run in producing far more frightful, widespread, and permanent misery than it was designed to remedy."

Many of those who heard or read these words of the noble Marquess must have been reminded of the French *droit au travail* and the public workshops that were established at one time in France. He might remind their Lordships of the work done in Lancashire at the time of the Cotton Famine. Useful works were carried out upon the sole responsibility of the Local Authority; the drainage of towns and villages was improved, new roads were laid out, and employment was provided in a variety of other ways which gained the approval of no less an authority than Sir Robert Rawlinson, who said—

> "In all cases local distress was relieved on works of a beneficial character upon the sole responsibility of the Local Authorities, who devised the works, employed the men, and superintended them; this being a guarantee that the works in each case were of a useful character. In the end, towns and villages were sewered, houses were drained, parks formed, cemeteries laid out, waterworks executed, and some 400 miles in length of streets and roads formed in the best manner, which were at the commencement tracts of mud. The sanitary condition of the district was raised, comfort secured, and life and health prolonged."

Sir Hugh Owen, Secretary to the Local Government Board, had shown that in many districts in the Metropolis and in other towns the Local Authorities might execute works which would provide remunerative employment for those in need of it. One important point to which a Commission might advantageously give attention was how best to produce co-operation between the distributors of relief from the rates and charitable organizations. As to the urgent nature of the distress no doubt could be entertained by anyone who studied the Returns of the Local Government Board. In February, 1885, the total number of persons receiving relief in the Metropolis was 97,000; in 1887 the number was 104,000; and this year the number was 110,000. He was anxious to guard himself against the charge of a desire or hope of obtaining anything like State relief for the poor; but in face of the continuance of distress he wished to urge the need of some action in the matter. He earnestly hoped that the Government would grant an Inquiry. People would not abstain from indiscriminate alms-giving until there was an assurance that the Poor Law system provided effective relief for absolute suffering and destitution. The only persons who would regard with dissatisfaction any investigation would be the advocates of Socialistic doctrines, who were anxious to make capital out of distress, or any supposed unwillingness of those in power to endeavour to see what could be done in a proper manner to relieve that distress. In conclusion, he suggested that it would be well to improve the machinery of the Poor Law so as to introduce greater uniformity in its adminstration. He begged to move the Resolution which stood in his name.

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty praying Her Majesty to issue a Royal Commission to inquire into the present systems of poor law relief, especially with reference to the apparent inadequacy of those systems to cope effectually with the distress recurring from time to time amongst large numbers of unemployed persons in the Metropolis and other populous places; or that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the subject."—(*The Earl of Aberdeen.*)

LORD THRING said, he hoped that the request of the noble Earl would not be refused by the Government. By inquiry they might discover means of making the Poor Law appear less harsh to the class whom it chiefly concerned. There ought, in his opinion, to be co-operation between charities and Poor Law administrators.

LORD BALFOUR said, that the want of uniformity in the administration of the Poor Law was one of the great advantages of the system, because no cast-iron rule which could be devised could possibly meet the varying circumstances of different localities. The principle of the Poor Law was that it should be administered by the representatives of the ratepayers in each district—subject, of course, to certain general rules and regulations laid down by the Central Authority—the belief being that the people of a district must understand its circumstances better than anyone else. The practice of boarding-out children, to which reference had been made, was encouraged as much as possible by the Local Government Board; but it was necessary to take care that children were not sent to unsuitable homes, and orphans could alone be dealt with in this way. Children who were taken into the workhouse by their parents could not be sent into the country, because the parents might claim their discharge at any moment. Local authorities had also been encouraged to permit children to leave the poor-house in order to attend schools outside. But there was difficulty and disadvantage in this except in workhouses where there was a large staff. In the workhouse of a small district, if the schoolmaster and schoolmistress were discharged, there would be no one left to look after the children when not in school except the adult paupers, and, as their Lordships knew, it was very undesirable to place children in their leisure hours under the control of paupers. In his Motion and in his speech the noble Earl had mixed up two very distinct things, the relief of distress and the duty of finding work for the unemployed; and with reference to the second point the noble Earl had alluded to Sir Robert Rawlinson's declarations at the time of the Cotton Famine in Lancashire. He believed that Sir Robert Rawlinson had distinctly said that the device which was resorted to in Lancashire was unsuitable to the Metropolis, because no such works as were carried out in Lancashire could be usefully carried out in London. As regarded the Motion itself, which seemed to imply that the Poor Law system was inadequate to meet any emergency which had arisen, he was obliged to join issue with the noble Lord. There was no evidence that that was the case, so far at least as the relief of destitution was concerned. The principle underlying the Poor Law was that no one was to receive relief from the poor rates unless he was destitute, and the Poor Law had nothing to do with poverty apart from destitution. The position he had laid down could be made good by figures. In England and Wales on the last week of January last the number of paupers, excluding lunatics and vagrants, was 778,000; in the corresponding week of January, 1880, the number was 795,000; and in 1870 it was 1,054,800, or 276,000 more than in January last. For the Metropolis the corresponding figures were—this year, 109,000; 1870, 166,000, or 57,000 more than at the present time. Therefore, there was no danger of the Poor Law system coping successfully with the present emergency, as it had successfully coped with more serious emergencies in the past. The real and first test to compare our position now with that at any former time, was to take the proportion of pauperism to population, and if this were done it would still further strengthen his contention. In January, 1870, for England and Wales the proportion was 47·5 paupers to every 1,000 of the population; in January last, it was only 27·5. In the Metropolis in January, 1870, it was 52·3; last January it was 25·9. If pauperism in England and Wales now bore the same proportion to the population that it did in 1880 we should have 1,341,000 paupers instead of 775,000. He quite admitted that in the Metropolis there had been an increase since the 1st of January in the number of persons chargeable to the rates from 106,000 to 109,000, but that had been owing to the long-continued severity of the winter. Perhaps, as a noble and learned Lord opposite suggested, recent legislation had increased the proportion of indoor paupers in London and large towns, but the figures he had given included in-door and out-door paupers. They must all remember that those who administered relief were not distributing a charity, but they were distributing a fund to which all ratepayers contributed according to their means, and the distributors must cast aside sentiment, and be guided less by their hearts than by their heads. Relief was only given to able-bodied male persons when they were out of employment and destitute. The test of destitution was admission to the workhouse or the performance of task-work, and tests were necessary for the protection of many ratepayers, who had a struggle to maintain their independence. Undoubtedly there was a large amount of suffering in the country at the present time, but it was not larger than it had been formerly, and it had been met with a fortitude which excited our surprise and admiration. If relief out of the poor rates were too easily obtained, present evils would be intensified rather than minimized. On behalf of struggling ratepayers, he implored their Lordships to do nothing that would make the administration of relief more difficult or that would make it more easy for those who were unsuccessful in the battle of life to come upon the rates. The slightest addition to the rates was a serious matter to those who were struggling to preserve their independence and were just above the line of pauperism. There was great difficulty in separating the deserving from the undeserving, and the problem was not likely to be hastily solved. It was a more difficult one for those who administered a public fund than for those who administered a private charity. He claimed that, at the present time, there was no ground for saying that the public provision for the mitigation and relief of destitution was inadequate to any emergency that had arisen, and there was no ground to fear a general breakdown of the system. The absence of uniformity between one Union and another did not necessarily involve any charge against the administration of the Poor Law. The noble Earl seemed to be referring to the case of Greenwich, where there was a large amount of outdoor relief compared with St. George's-in-the-East, where the amount was small; but the circumstances of the two Unions were not similar, and undoubtedly St. George's was one of the best administered Unions in the Metropolis. The case of Greenwich had been the subject of special inquiry at the instance of the President of the Local Government Board. There had been a large increase of house property of the smallest and poorest class simultaneously with the closing of local factories and works, and as there was a deficiency of workhouse accommodation a disproportionate amount of outdoor relief had necessarily been given. As to the question of distress in the Metropolis, he should like to say that London and other large centres of population had unfortunately been flooded for the past year or two by numbers of people who had come from the agricultural districts in the hope—delusive, no doubt—of obtaining work. One of the causes, but perhaps not the chief cause of this, had been the idea that large charitable funds were being distributed in the Metropolis and elsewhere. Very little sufficed to draw people artifically from one district to another. Their Lordships might have noticed that in the course of last autumn a number of people took to sleeping in the open in Trafalgar Square. As the weather became colder the attention of some philanthropic persons was directed to the miserable condition of these people, and it was thought that it would be a good thing to supply them with coffee and refreshments at night. The result was most unfortunate, because the news spread, and numbers of others in a like condition came to the Square in the hope of sharing in the distribution. Trafalgar Square was in the Strand Union, and that union did not possess a very large casual ward. The consequence was it soon became overcrowded, and the Guardians had each night to send 500 or 600 people to common lodging-houses in the district. The lodging-houses were obviously more attractive than the casual wards, especially as they were near Covent Garden. So that the coffee in the Square, the lodging-houses, and the hope that work might be got in Covent Garden in the morning induced a very large number of people to visit the district. When the Guardians found premises in which to put these people under the casual wards' system, the influx ceased. The noble Earl said he thought that the present was an opportune time to inquire into the matter to which he had called attention. He was not quite certain of that. There were many persons just now who were more subject to kindness of heart than to hardness of head in this matter, and he hoped that so far as a Royal Commission was concerned their Lordships would not agree to the Motion of the noble Earl. The Royal Commission on Agricultural Depression and the Royal Commission on Depression in Trade had already dealt with the causes of distress, and nothing could be added to our knowledge on these points. There could exist no reason for the appointment of another Royal Commission on the same subject. And under no circumstances could they accept the motion as it stood; but if there was a general feeling in the House that an inquiry by a Committee of their Lordships would be of service, he, or the President of the Local Government Board, would be prepared to confer with the noble Earl and endeavour to frame such a Reference as would be acceptable. At the same time, the Government were not without fear that even the limited inquiry which he had indicated would raise hopes which could not be satisfied, and would tend to intensify rather than diminish the evil which existed.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY said, he was glad to hear the concluding sentences of the speech of the noble Lord who had just sat down, because he thought that an inquiry by a Committee of their Lordships might prove very useful. At the same time, he quite admitted the danger of which the noble Lord had spoken, and thought they must balance that danger against another—namely, that if they refused an inquiry, misrepresentations and wrong impressions as to the administration of the Poor Law might be entertained. If an inquiry were held these misrepresentations and wrong impressions might be removed, and many schemes proved to be impracticable. He concurred in a great deal which the noble Lord who had spoken for the Government had said, and he was exceedingly glad to hear him bring forward the figures as to the amount of pauperism in the country. There was an extraordinary misconception on that subject. He thought that the last year with reference to which they had a Return showed only a very small increase over the lowest year in the previous period. Although there was great depression and more unemployed persons than usual, there were certain indications that the distress had not been so acute as persons represented it to be. Our system of Poor Law relief was based upon the principle that no person should be allowed to suffer seriously in health, still less to die, for want of food, shelter, and the ordinary necessaries of life. They could not go further than that. It was not a system of general charity, but one for saving life and preventing suffering, and whenever they passed from that sound principle they got into difficulties. As to uniformity, he knew that there were great differences between unions in different parts of the country. He knew of unions similarly circumstanced, where the administration of the law was carried out in a different way from what it was in the other. The noble Lord had stated that one of the causes of the recent distress was the migration of the agricultural labourers into the towns. That was said to be the case to a very large extent, but he should like to know to what extent. His own opinion was that the distress in the Metropolis was mainly due to the failure of the docks in the East of London, and to certain changes with regard to other industries, which were now left stranded. Then, again, there had been a singular increase of vagrancy in many parts of the country, and the cause of this was not very clearly known. As to the establishment of relief works, he would point out to his noble Friend that such a step meant that people would crowd into any locality in which they were started, besides which it would be a departure from the ordinary principles of the law. An important point was the co-ordination of private charity with the Poor Law. They ought not to extend the Poor Law system so as to kill private charity, and on the other hand they wanted to encourage thrift among the working classes, and to lead them to take advantage of benefit clubs and of opportunities to lay by for times of sickness and old age. It was only by a strict administration of the Poor Law that they could induce those people to do that. While, however, he held that a strict administration of the Poor Law was of the highest importance, it was also of great importance that its general administration should have the confidence of the respectable labouring population. They required to have for that administration the moral support, not of the richer classes only, but of the whole body of the population, and therefore he did not think that inquiry would be misplaced.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS said, he was glad to hear that the Government did not object to an inquiry. But he was anxious for an inquiry on different grounds from those contained in the Motion. The Motion of his noble Friend, in its introductory part, rather implied that it was based on the inadequacy of the present Poor Law to meet existing requirements. Now, he thought that inquiry would show two things—that there had been a gross exaggeration as to the amount of distress existing, and that the Poor Law properly administered was equal to the emergency. The distress in London in the winter of 1861, as shown by the statistics of pauperism, was very severe; and a Select Committee stated in their Report that there was strong evidence that such distress could have been relieved by the Poor Law Authorities, inasmuch as the machinery of administration was sufficient, and the Guardians possessed the requisite powers for raising the necessary funds, but that the charge would press hard on some parishes in the Metropolis. Since 1861 legislation had been passed in regard to the common Poor Law fund, which had improved the system. His noble Friend was anxious for co-operation between charity and the Poor Law. That co-operation had now being going on for a long period. They now had the Poor Law for giving general relief to the poor, the police to look after vagrancy, and the Charity Organization Society for dealing with other cases deserving help, and other societies all co-operating together. He believed that the result of the forthcoming inquiry would be to remove much dissatisfaction, and to clear away much misapprehension both as to the amount of distress existing and as to the means of relief.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY (Dr. BENSON) said, he received only too much evidence of great misery existing, a vast number of people suffering, and many suffering without their misery being made known to the public. He was also made aware of the great and increasing feeling of doubt as to whether the Poor Law was competent, as at present administered, to deal with that distress. He much desired to see that doubt set at rest. He was thankful to the noble Lord behind him for the statistics he had laid before them; and he had little doubt that the result of inquiry would be very much what the noble Lord who had spoken last had predicted. Among much sad information that they had received during the last winter, some of the saddest was that there was no more than the normal amount of distress. If it was normal, it was far too great to be allowed to exist without larger attempts being made to remove it. It was said that there were but 2 per cent of the sufferers who were honest. If so, it was no matter for congratulation that the other 98 per cent were not honest. Whatever were the merits of the Poor Law itself, doubts arose as to its administration, and those doubts seemed certainly at first sight the more reasonable because of the great variety of that administration in parishes in the circumstances of which none but the Guardians themselves could see any difference. He would not for a moment advocate giving way to indolent and ignorant doubt; but doubt on this subject led to spasmodic and mischievous action under the influence of panic, and it was to be hoped that the contemplated inquiry would create confidence and silence many alarms. Reference had been made to the Charity Organization Society as supplementing the working of the Poor Law; but the excellent operations of that Society applied only to the Metropolis, and even only to parts of the Metropolis. So long as the doubts to which he had alluded existed, not only would relief subscriptions be started, perhaps injudiciously, but an undesirable ill-feeling would exist towards the Guardians of the Poor. If that inquiry should make it clear that the Guardians were serving the poor in the best way, real advantage would be gained; but if it should turn out that the existing state of things was likely to be permanent, to continue "normal," or gradually to increase, they would probably require something more than the present Poor Law to meet the necessities of the situation. This was meant simply for the relief of the poor in their hard times, not for a cure of poverty. The present proportion of the worthless class to the rest of the poor might easily be made much larger by throwing into it, through ill-advised administration, many of the rather feeble poor who were still willing to do their best, and if the result of inquiry should be to check the increase of the worthless class by encouraging systems of thrift, inducing the people to resort to them, or to make themselves more skilful in their trades, this would do great national good, and we should cease to supply material for the agitator and the anarchist.

EARL FORTESCUE said, that the fund out of which rates were taken was the fund which provided wages for the working population, and you could not encroach largely upon it without diminishing the amount of employment which could be given, adding to the number of unemployed and getting into a vicious circle. What was given in charity was one thing, what was exacted from the ratepayers was another. The effect of enormous rates in diminishing employment showed how dangerous it was to extend indefinitely the claims upon the wage-supplying fund by any undue laxity of Poor Law administration which tempted men to rely on relief out of public funds.

THE EARL OF ABERDEEN said, he would withdraw the Motion in its present shape, and confer with the noble Lord opposite as to the terms of one which might be open to fewer objections.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT.

Message from the House of Commons that they have appointed a Committee, to consist of Six Members, to join with a Committee of their Lordships to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament; and to request that their Lordships will be pleased to appoint an equal number of Lords to be joined with the Members of that House: Ordered, that the said Message be taken into consideration *To-morrow.*

House adjourned at a quarter past Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 8*th March*, 1888.

MINUTES.]—SELECT COMMITTEE—Grant of Supplies, *appointed.*

SUPPLY—*considered in Committee*—ARMY ESTIMATES (1888-9); Vote I. NUMBERS; Vote II. EFFECTIVE SERVICES.

PUBLIC BILLS—*Resolution in Committee*—Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland [Salary, &c]—R.P.

Ordered — Frst Reading — Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act (1886) Amendment (No. 2)* [162].

Second Reading—Trawling (Scotland)* [155], *debate adjourned;* Occupiers' Disqualification Removal* [110], *debate adjourned.*

QUESTIONS.

—o—

CITY OF LONDON—CORN AND GRAIN DUTIES.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the President of the Board of Trade, If it is a fact that, by a Statute enacted in 1872, the Corporation of the City of London was empowered to demand and receive a duty at the rate of 3-16ths of a penny per cwt. upon corn and all other grain brought into London for sale; if the said duty has been, and is now being, levied upon grain grown in Great Britain and Ireland, as well as upon Colonial and Foreign grain; what has been the average revenue produced by the Grain Duty during the past five years; if it has been applied in the reduction of local taxation, or otherwise contributing to the benefit of the citizens of London; and, if the price of either wheat, barley, oats, or other grain in the City of London has at any period during the past five years been in excess of the average price elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

THE PRESIDENT (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): This duty is levied under the Statute quoted, but solely on grain brought into the Port of London, of which only a small proportion is grown in Great Britain and Ireland. The average net revenue for five years has been £12,687. It has been applied to the preservation of open spaces outside the Metropolis in the neighbourhood of London. I can give no trustworthy statistics in reply to the last Question; but this duty is so small, varying from ¾*d.* to ½*d.* per quarter, that it can hardly affect the price of grain.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT: Does the duty apply to British grain if brought round to London by sea.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: Of course it would; but the amount was so small that no calculation could be made of it.

ISLANDS OF THE PACIFIC—RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN TONGA.

MR. W. H. JAMES (Gateshead) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether he is aware that in Tonga the youths who were set to hard labour for refusing to take the military oath, and many other persons who were imprisoned for attending Wesleyan places of worship, are still working out their sentences; and, whether a Proclamation restoring religious freedom to the Islands has been issued by the King or Mr. Shirley Baker, in conformity with the promise made to Her Majesty's High Commissioner?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): Her Majesty's Government have not received information showing that many persons are still working out their sentences. In June last the Acting Vice-Consul at Tonga brought before the local Premier a Report that—

> "The college and other men convicted for not taking the military oath were still working as prisoners;"

to which Mr. Baker replied that the King—

> "Has to the very best of his ability complied with all the promises made to Sir Charles Mitchell, and is not aware of any promise so made remaining unfulfilled;"

also, that with regard to the political prisoners refusing to take the oath, the two whom his Excellency requested to be set at liberty were immediately set free. The Proclamation of religious freedom is reported to have been published in Lifuka; but it is not known here whether it has been published in the other Islands. As the Secretary of State informed the House on the 21st ultimo, it is desirable to await the further information which Sir Charles Mitchell will be able to give when he arrives here next month.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—SUB-COMMISSIONERS AT ARMAGH.

Mr. BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If the Irish Government will cause the Land Sub-Commission to sit at an early date in Keady, County Armagh, to hear the applications listed a considerable time back for the fixing of fair rents; if Government are aware that many of those applicants are in arrears of rent; and, if the urgency of the cases would be considered by them?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Land Commissioners inform me that there will be a sitting of a Sub-Commission in Keady, County Armagh, in the month of June. The Commissioners state that if there are any cases of urgency—that is, where decrees in ejectment for non-payment of rent have been obtained—they will, in accordance with their usual practice, on the application of the parties, delegate their cases to the nearest Sub-Commission working in the adjoining district, so as to prevent the rights of the tenants in their holdings being lost by reason of the want of a fair rent being fixed in the meantime.

COURT OF BANKRUPTCY (IRELAND)—THOMAS MORONEY, A PRISONER FOR CONTEMPT.

Sir UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH (Lancashire, Clitheroe) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the attention of Her Majesty's Government has been called to the fact that Thomas Moroney, tenant farmer and shopkeeper, Herbertstown, County Limerick, committed on 28th January, 1887, for contempt of Court by the Judge in the Dublin Bankruptcy Court, has remained in prison from that day until now—that is to say, for more than 13 months; Whether such a prolonged imprisonment is in accordance with precedents in cases of this kind; and, whether, in view of the exceptional duration of the penalty, Her Majesty's Government will consider the possibility of taking steps to secure Moroney's release, or whether they intend to acquiesce in the continued imprisonment of this man for an indefinite length of time?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: Thomas Moroney, having refused to be sworn in the Court of Bankruptcy and to give evidence, was on the 28th of January, 1887, pursuant to the powers conferred by the 385th section of the Bankruptcy Act, 1857, committed to prison until he should submit to be sworn and give evidence. He had on a former occasion admitted in Court that he had sold off all his property and paid his money into the so-called "war chest" under the Plan of Campaign. The object of the examination on the occasion on which he refused to be sworn was to ascertain where that money was. His continued imprisonment is in accordance with the usual practice of the Court. He could always have obtained, and can at any moment obtain, his release by submitting himself to be sworn and give evidence. Her Majesty's Government have no power to interfere with a Judge in the discharge of his duty imposed by Act of Parliament.

Mr. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): I wish to ask the right hon. and gallant Gentleman whether it is a fact that John Dwyer, of Tipperary, was committed to Clonmel Gaol on the 31st of March, 1886?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! Under the Standing Order, Notice of the Question should be given in the usual way.

Sir UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: I would wish the right hon. and gallant Gentleman would answer the second paragraph of my Question, whether such a prolonged imprisonment as 13 months was in accordance with precedent in cases of this kind?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: When a man refuses to be sworn to give evidence in a Court of Bankruptcy, he remains in prison until he has purged himself of his contempt.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): In consequence of the answer given by the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, I wish to ask whether it is not a fact that the other Judge of the Court of Bankruptcy —Judge Miller—has recently discharged a man named M'Carthy, who was imprisoned for the same offence for six months; and whether it is not the usual custom not to imprison longer than 12 months, at all events.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: It must be obvious to the hon. Gentleman that I would require Notice of that Question. I would, however, point out that the Government has no jurisdiction whatever over the orders of this kind of the Judges of the Court of Bankruptcy.

COAL MINES REGULATION ACT, 1872—EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS (NUMBERS).

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked the Secretary of State for for the Home Department, What were the numbers of women and of girls (as defined in Parliamentary Paper No. 163, of Session 1887) employed in 1887 under "The Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1872?"

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E): The number of females under 13 years of age employed in coal mines during 1887 was two; between 13 and 16 years, 259; and above 16, 3,922—making a total of 4,183.

INLAND REVENUE—INCOME TAX ON REAL PROPERTY.

SIR EDWARD BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, taking into consideration the fact that, in the case of income derived from investments in Railway Stocks, trades, &c., Income Tax is only levied on the net profits, he will for the future place real property on the same basis, and make an allowance for the cost of repairs, insurance, and collection?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I am afraid that this subject is much too large to be dealt with within the limits of an answer to a Question over the Table. It opens up the whole subject of what should be the relative incidence of taxation, Imperial and local, on real and personal property; and it would be impossible for me to compress into a few lines the many arguments for and against the present basis of assessment.

FINANCE—LOCAL LOANS STOCK.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, What amount of Local Loans Stock has been issued; what were the terms of the issue; and, what amounts respectively of Permanent and Floating Debt have been cancelled by the issue of the Local Loans Stock?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The £36,526,000 Local Loans Stock created was issued to the National Debt Commissioners in exchange for £26,559,000 Three per Cent Stock, and £9,469,000 Public Works Loan Bonds held on account of Savings Banks Funds, all of which were cancelled. Of this amount £18,200,000 has been sold or exchanged with the public. £7,400,000 was exchanged for other Three per Cent Government Annuities on equal terms. Subsequently £600,000 was sold by the Government Broker at an average price of £104 2*s*. 6*d*., and the proceeds were applied in the purchase of Consols and Reduced, which were bought for that purpose at an average price of £103 3*s*. and £103 5*s*. respectively. Subsequently £10,000,000 were exchanged by public tender for Three per Cent Annuities at at the following average rates for £100 Local Loans Stock: Consols, £101 16*s*. 7*d*.; Reduced, £101 6*s*. 8*d*.; New, £101 5*s*. 10*d*. The total amount of Three per Cent Annuities thus exchanged was—Consols, £2,466,997; Reduced, £1,117,804; New, £6,557,819—total, £10,142,620. Of the Local Loans Stock thus allotted by tender, no portion was taken, as has been asserted, by any Government Department. Since this tender no transactions have taken place, except that £200,000 was given in exchange to a Government Department very soon after the tender. The total amount of Three per Cent Annuities received in exchange for the £18,200,000 Local Loans Stock issued is £18,351,702. This is all Permanent Debt.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: With reference to the second paragraph of my Question and the answer that £6,600,000 has been exchanged for Consols and Reduced—on what terms?

Mr. GOSCHEN: £7,400,000 was exchanged for Three per Cents on equal terms, Stock for Stock.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: Then a Three per Cent Stock issued at par?

Mr. GOSCHEN: It was exchanged for Consols. If the right hon. Gentleman wishes to raise an argumentative Question I will be ready to deal with it on another occasion. I may state that at the beginning it was difficult to exchange this new Stock for Consols. In the view of many bankers Consols were considered better than the new Stock. Though this was an erroneous view, it was the one on which they acted.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: Does the right hon. Gentleman mean by Government Departments to include the Bank of England?

Mr. GOSCHEN: That is not a Government Department. The Bank tendered for a considerable amount, and so did the Bank of Ireland.

CIVIL SERVICE (IRELAND)—PROMOTION OF WRITERS.

Mr. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, How many writers were recommended by Heads of Departments in Dublin for promotion to the Lower Division of the Civil Service under the Treasury Minute of December, 1886; in how many cases is it proposed to give effect to these recommendations; what are the names of the Offices in question; and, how many writers it is proposed to promote in each?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): The Treasury regard the communications which pass between them and other Departments on the cases of individuals as confidential; and I do not think it would be right for me to give the details for which the hon. Member asks. It is intended, when the inquiry is complete, to submit the Reports on the subject to the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments for their information.

EGYPT—RED SEA LIGHTS.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Has his attention been called to the want of a light on Cape Guardafui, at the entrance to the Gulf of Aden, or a light at the eastern point of the Island of Socotra, which was lately acquired by the British Government; and, if any arrangement is come to with the foreign Governments also interested in the management of the Red Sea lights, will he undertake to obtain evidence as to the best position for more lights there from the captains of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company and Orient Steam Navigation Company?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): Since I have been at the Foreign Office the want of such a light has been fully discussed with the Board of Trade. If it should be determined to erect one, it would be a matter of course that the Board would act upon the best evidence in the selection of a site. The difficulty in the case is the indisposition of shipowners to pay any more light dues, and at present there are no funds available for the purpose.

ADMIRALTY—COASTGUARD STATION AT CARNE, CO. WEXFORD.

Mr. HARRIS (Galway, E.) (for Mr. J. Barry) (Wexford, S.) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, If the old Coastguard Station at Carne, County Wexford, was condemned by the Admiralty Authorities, and a site for a new Station purchased or rented a considerable time ago; what is the cause of delay in the erection of the new Station; and, when will the work be commenced?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): The cottages at the Coastguard Station referred to have not been condemned, but are stated to be crowded and inconvenient, and a site for a new Station was leased in December, 1886. The delay in the erection of the new buildings is due to the necessity of satisfying more pressing claims. It is hoped that it will be possible to proceed with them in the next financial year.

MERCANTILE MARINE — COLLISION AT SEA — "BRITANNIC" AND "CELTIC."

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether the Board of Trade has has given further consideration to the findings of the Court of Inquiry held at

New York, in the case of the collision between the *Britannic* and *Celtic* in a fog, and to the recommendations of the Council of the Mercantile Marine Service Association, that the International Regulations of Navigation should be so amended that distinctive signals by long and short blasts on a steam whistle or foghorn, to indicate the course of vessels, shall be used in fogs as well as when another vessel is in sight; and, whether the Board has, as yet, entered into communications with the United States and other Governments as to the advisability and possibility of minimizing the risk of collision in fog, by amending the International Regulations in the way suggested by the Mercantile Marine Service Association?

THE PRESIDENT (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The attention of the Board of Trade has been given to the subject referred to by the hon. Member; and the whole question of signalling at sea was referred by my Predecessor in Office to a Committee, consisting of the Assistant Secretary to the Marine Department of the Board of Trade, Admiral Sir F. L. M'Clintock, Captain Bowden-Smith, R.N., Sir G. Nares, Sir Digby Murray, Captain C. P. Wilson, the Registrar General of Seamen, and the Secretary of Lloyd's. The Committee is now sitting; and until I receive their Report I can, of course, give no answer.

INLAND REVENUE—GUN LICENCES FOR SHORT PERIODS.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If he will be good enough to consider whether it might be for the benefit of the Revenue, as well as a convenience to many of the less wealthy classes, to provide for granting gun licences for short periods at a reduced rate, corresponding to the system in force with respect to licences for shooting game?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I am afraid it is impossible for me to answer such Questions as that of the hon. Member just before the Budget. All suggestions coming from him, or from other quarters, are fairly considered by me; but the hon. Member must not take this declaration as either an acceptance or a rejection of his present proposal.

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND)—TRAWLING.

MR. ANSTRUTHER (St. Andrew's, &c.) asked the Lord Advocate, If the Secretary for Scotland will instruct the Fishery Board for Scotland that a Return be appended to their next Annual Report, in the form of Appendix H to the 5th Annual Report—"Return of Complaints made to the Officers of the Fishery Board for Scotland of damage done by trawlers and other fishing boats to the boats, nets, lines, and gear of Fishermen," showing the complaints made to the Fishery Board for Scotland of contravention of the byelaw of the 5th of April, 1886, prohibiting trawling within certain waters, and the proceedings taken thereon by the officers of the Fishery Board?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): A Return such as my hon. Friend refers to will be included in the appendix to the forthcoming Report to Parliament by the Fishery Board, and it is intended to publish such a Report annually.

MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.) asked the Lord Advocate, If it is within the Powers of the Scotch Fishery Board, with the sanction of the Secretary for Scotland, to prohibit trawling within the three-mile limit on the entire coast of Scotland; and, if not, what is the limit of the jurisdiction referred to?

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD: This is a pure Question of legal construction of an Act of Parliament, and is matter of opinion, as to which I am no better authority than any legal adviser whom the hon. Member may consult. The matter has not yet been made the subject of any decision of a Court of Law.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON CIVIL ESTABLISHMENTS—CUSTOMS OR PRINCIPAL COAST OFFICERS.

MR. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the Commissioners on Civil Establishments will make an inquiry into the position of the Customs or Principal Coast Officers; and, if so, when it is likely to be taken?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N): I am informed that the Commissioners see no prospect of being able to enter upon an examination into the Customs Department during the present Session of Parliament.

CUSTOMS AND INLAND REVENUE ACT 1887—COMPOSITION OF STAMP DUTY.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, How many Companies or Corporations have compounded under the 8th and following sections of "The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1887;" and, what is the amount of capital in respect of which such composition has been made?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): Agreements for the composition of Stamp Duty on transfers and share warrants have been entered into with 9 Corporations and 15 Companies. The paid-up capital in respect of which such compositions have been made amounted in the case of the Corporations to £2,164,562, and in the case of the Companies to £8,780,719, or a total of £10,945,281.

POST OFFICE—POSTAL SERVICE TO CYPRUS.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry) asked the Postmaster General, Whether it is true that the regular postal service to Cyprus is conducted by the Austrian Lloyd and the French Messageries Maritimes; and, whether he will consider the expediency of re-establishing an English service, such as existed during the first five years of the British occupation?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): The Cyprus mails are at present carried by the special Indian mail service overland as far as Brindisi, thence by packets of the Peninsular and Oriental Company to Alexandria or Port Said, and onward from Egypt by Austrian or French steamers, as opportunities offer. There was, undoubtedly, a heavy loss on the mail service between this country and Cyprus while it was maintained by the Government; but I shall be glad to consider any new circumstances which may have arisen since the termination of that arrangement, and which my hon. Friend may like to bring to my notice.

CYPRUS—TAXES.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry) asked the Under Secretary of States for the Colonies, Whether it is true that the sum of £92,800 a year, raised by taxes in Cyprus, and originally paid over to the Porte according to the Convention of 1878, has of late years been paid to the French and English Governments; what is the total amount which has thus been paid to the French Government; and, what services the French Government have rendered to the people of Cyprus which would justify the taxation of the people in their behalf?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): This matter was fully and clearly explained by the Secretary of State in this House on the 6th of September last. Briefly stated, the facts are as follows:—By the Anglo-Turkish Convention of 1878 the Revenues of Cyprus are charged with an annual tribute to Turkey amounting to £92,800. In 1855, a loan was raised by Turkey, the interest on which was guaranteed by England and France jointly. Since 1876, Turkey has failed to provide for the interest; and, consequently, France and England have become liable to the bondholders to the extent of about £40,872 each annually. The administration of Cyprus having fallen into the hands of England, it had been arranged, with the acquiescence of Turkey, that the Island tribute, instead of being paid to the Turkish Government, shall be devoted to recouping the French and English Governments for the loss they would otherwise have incurred through the default of Turkey. The total amount thus paid to the French Government in seven years has been £286,000; and I must point out to my hon. Friend that, as was stated in February, 1886, by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for East Denbighshire (Mr. Osborne Morgan), then Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, it would have been contrary to the rules of equity for one of two guarantors, having got possession of an asset belonging to a defaulting guaranteed person, to refuse to share the benefit of it with his co-guarantor.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON asked, Whether the Sublime Porte accepted the arrangement without any remonstrance?

Baron HENRY DE WORMS replied that he could not go into that.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—SUB-COMMISSION AT MANORHAMILTON.

Mr. CONWAY (Leitrim, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he can state when the sub-Commission for County Leitrim will hear fair rent applications entered for the Union of Manorhamilton; and, whether some of the cases have been listed for a period of 14 months?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Land Commissioners inform me a sub-Commission will sit to hear fair rent cases from Manorhamilton Poor Law Union on the 4th of next month. Some of the cases for hearing have been lodged for 14 months.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON CIVIL ESTABLISHMENTS—FIRST REPORT.

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether his attention has been called to the recommendation in the First Report of the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments, that the Civil Service should be dealt with as a whole, and not by Departments; and, whether it is proposed to re-arrange the clerical staff of the Admiralty by itself, on the recommendation of a Departmental Committee, and not in accordance with the recommendations of the Royal Commission; and, if so, for what reason?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I have seen the first Report of the Royal Commission on Civil Services. It is obviously impossible for me, in answer to a Question, to discuss the large and important subject of organization. I do not, however, admit that I am precluded from sanctioning reductions of staff or expenditure in various Departments, where such reduction is compatible with efficiency, nor even that it is necessary to postpone all such reduction until the completion of the work of the Royal Commission, which may occupy a considerable time.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked, if the re-organization would increase the pension list?

Mr. GOSCHEN replied that the re-organization had yet to be decided on, and he was not prepared to answer the Question.

NATIONAL SCHOOLS (IRELAND)—PATRICK O'RORKE, RETIRED TEACHER.

Mr. KENNEDY (Sligo, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to the case of the late Patrick O'Rorke, National School teacher of Culfadda, Ballymote, County Sligo, who, having entered the National Board's service in 1847, after 38 years' work retired in bad health, and died after nine months' retirement, leaving a widow and 11 children; whether he paid into the Teachers' Pension Fund; whether during the period of his retirement he received £20 only from the Pension Fund; and whether, considering the character and services of the late Patrick O'Rorke, something can be done for his widow and children?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, he was informed that the National School Teacher referred to subscribed £4 only to the Pension Fund. He died 10 months after retirement, during which time he received a pension of £23. The Board had, unfortunately, no power to award any pension to his widow or children.

ALLOTMENTS ACT—TOWN COUNCIL OF TENTERDEN.

Mr. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether the Tenterden Town Council, as the Sanitary Authority, after receiving an application for allotments from a number of ratepayers, issued handbills inviting from landowners offers of lands suitable for allotments, to be sent in by a given date, and received no offer from any landowner; whether, on the 21st of February, the Town Clerk wrote to the applicants for allotments, saying that, not having received any offers of land suitable for allotments, the Sanitary Authority were unable to carry out the provisions of the Act; whether the present allotment holders near Tenterden are paying a rent of £12 an acre; and, whether the Local Government Board will represent to the Town Clerk of Tenterden that the fact of the Sanitary Authority not having received offers of land from landowners does not justify them in refusing to carry out the provisions of the Act.

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I have made inquiry into the facts, and find that the Tenterden Town Council, having received a requisition under the Allotments Act, appointed a Committee to consider the matter and report. The Committee first issued public notices that they would attend at a place named to receive applications for allotments, and on that day applications were received from 32 persons. The Committee then issued public notices inviting offers of land suitable for allotments, with terms of letting. No offers of land were received up to the date mentioned in the notices; and the Town Council, on the 21st of February, informed Mr. Hatcher, who was acting for the applicants, that no offer having been obtained the Committee were unable to carry out the provisions of the Act any further at present. On the 25th February, the Town Council sent a Circular Letter to all owners of land in the vicinity of the town to the effect that, for the purpose of the Allotments Act, they would require about 15 acres of land within a short distance of the town, and inquiring whether they were willing to let land for the purpose. The Town Council are awaiting replies. There has, therefore, been no refusal by the Town Council to carry out the provisions of the Act.

ALLOTMENTS ACT—FARNBOROUGH.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether he is aware that on the 16th February, a deputation from Farnborough attended before the Rural Sanitary Authority at Banbury, and, after pointing out the failure of the steps which had been taken to procure land for allotments by agreement, called upon the Authority to purchase 27 acres of land compulsorily, under the Allotments Act; and that the Chairman told the depuation that

> "To put the Act into force and take land compulsorily would cause as much expense as they could buy the land for,"

and added that

> "He might as well tell the deputation honestly that, if they were to buy land forcibly, it would cost as much as £400 (meaning, apparently, exclusive of the price of the land), and would take two years to do it;"

and, whether he will cause inquiries to be made as to these statements, and repeat to the Chairman of the Banbury Rural Sanitary Authority the assurances which were given by Members of the Government when the Bill was before Parliament last Session, that the procedure for compulsorily acquiring land would be cheap and practicable?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I have communicated with the Banbury Rural Sanitary Authority, and I learn that a deputation attended a meeting of that Authority with reference to land being obtained for allotments for the labouring population of Farnborough. The deputation were asked whether they had not had land in a suitable position offered to them for the purpose at a reasonable rent, and they replied that they had. The only difficulty appeared to be that they were called upon to erect a fence to separate this land from other land belonging to the same farm. I am informed that the Chairman stated generally that if land were taken compulsorily the cost would be about £400, and that it would probably take about two years before possession could be obtained; but no remark was made as to purchasing compulsorily the piece of land referred to by the deputation, as it could be obtained without compulsory powers. If a Sanitary Authority promote a Provisional Order under the Allotments Act, and the Order is not opposed in Parliament, compulsory powers can be obtained at a small expense; but if the Order is opposed in Parliament the Committee are empowered to award costs, to be paid by the opponents if the Committee consider that the opposition was not justified by the circumstances. This has been explained to the Chairman of the Sanitary Authority.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman would issue a Memorandum calling the attention of the Authorities to the provisions of the Act?

MR. RITCHIE said, that he had long since anticipated the hon. Gentleman's suggestion and sent Circulars to all the Rural Sanitary Authorities?

MR. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford) asked, whether any answers had been received to the communications sent by the Local Government Board?

Mr. RITCHIE said, that the Local Government Board made no inquiries of the Authorities, and therefore no answers were to be expected. The Memorandum simply explained the provisions of the Act.

SCOTLAND—"THE AGITATION IN LEWIS."

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether his attention has been directed to an account of certain proceedings on the part of the police, supported by an armed force, for the purpose of arresting accused persons at an unusually early hour on the morning of Wednesday, 22nd February, as contained in *The Scotsman* newspaper on the following day, and headed "The Agitation in Lewis.—Another Raid on Bayble;" whether any of these lately accused persons in Lewis have failed to appear before the Sheriff, on being warned or cited so to do; whether in particular Murdo Mackenzie, in Lower Bayble, who is described as having been in bed for a week, suffering from chest complaint and ulcerated leg, but taken out of bed and threatened with compulsory removal to Stornoway, whilst protesting that he could not put his foot under him, had been so warned to appear; and, whether, as it would appear that the feelings of Mackenzie's relatives and neighbours were hurt by these proceedings, he will give instructions that in the discharge of their duties the police will be cautioned to use no avoidable harshness?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The people of Point, in which Bayble is situated, have been in a somewhat turbulent spirit for some time. A fortnight before the occurrence in question, two constables who were citing persons to come to Court on a criminal charge from this place were mobbed and stoned; and it was, therefore, not thought advisable to proceed by citation in other cases. Information was laid before the Sheriff, at the instance of the Public Prosecutor, against Murdo Mackenzie and others for a serious crime. When apprehended, he pleaded that he could not be removed in custody, as he was suffering from a sore leg. A surgeon, having examined him, certified to the Sheriff Substitute that he could be moved without injury. The Sheriff Substitute, however, on his promising to appear at Stornoway on any day for which he might be cited, did not order his removal. The reverse of gratitude was shown for this consideration, for when two constables were sent some days after to cite the accused persons they were mobbed, and followed and stoned for a distance of about a mile from the township. In answer to the last paragraph, I have to say that in this case exceptional consideration was shown; that no harshness whatever was used; and that the considerate conduct of the Sheriff Substitute received no response except rudeness and insult.

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH asked, if it was not the case that Mackenzie voluntarily surrendered himself?

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD said, it was a fact that Mackenzie had voluntarily surrendered himself on being cited; but it was also the fact that when the citation was sent to him the constables were assaulted.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) wished to know whether Mackenzie received legal or illegal consideration; whether he got more or less than the law allowed, or no more; and what gratitude he was expected to extend to the Law Officers?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—ST. STEPHEN'S CRYPT.

Mr. COCHRANE - BAILLIE (St Pancras, N.) asked the First Commissioner of Works, Whether the facilities which existed previous to the year 1885 for viewing St. Stephen's Crypt can again be granted?

The FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. Plunket) (Dublin University), in reply, said, he had been in communication with the Home Office on the subject, and was informed that the authorities there did not think it desirable at present that the crypt should be re-opened.

ADMIRALTY—POSITION OF ENGINEER OFFICERS.

Sir WILLIAM CROSSMAN (Portsmouth) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, If it is the case that Engineer officers of the Royal Navy under the rank of Chief Engineer, when at the Royal Naval College at Greenwich, although holding the same relative rank as Lieutenants and Sub-Lieutenants, are not allowed to mess with the Executive officers of that rank, but are placed in a mess by themselves; if so, why this distinction, which is considered by the Engineer officers as an invidious one, is made, and why the same Regulations as to messing could not be carried out at the Naval College as on board ship, the senior officers of the same relative rank, whether of the Executive or Civil branches, having one mess, and the junior officers of the same relative rank another?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): The division of messes is convenient and has worked well. If, however, an Engineer officer of a higher grade than the Engineer students returns to the College, after service at sea, for a special course of study, it will be easy to arrange that he should have the option of joining whichever mess he may prefer.

POLICE (METROPOLIS)—PRIMITIVE METHODIST GOSPEL MISSION.

MR. R. CHAMBERLAIN (Islington, W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the Primitive Methodist Gospel Mission open air services, hitherto conducted in Market Street, Caledonian Road, have been recently prohibited by the police, notwithstanding that these services have been held for two years without cause for complaint, and that a large majority of the ratepayers in the district is in favour of their continuance; and, whether he can state the reasons for police interference if this has taken place?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that in January last he received a written complaint from the inhabitants of Market Street, Caledonian Road, of the annoyance caused by religious services. The services were not prohibited by the police; but the holder of the service, on being informed of the complaint, voluntarily changed the place of meeting to another neighbouring street, where the residents did not object, and where the services are now held without complaint.

CIVIL SERVICE WRITERS—PROMOTION.

MR. HOOPER (Cork, S.E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether, out of about 200 Civil Service Writers recommended for promotion to the Lower Division by the various Heads of Departments, in accordance with the terms of the Treasury Minute of December, 1886, 58 of whom were promoted, no inquiry by the Departmental Committee appointed to examine into the work, &c. of such writers was made in the case of any writer whose age happened to be under 25, on the ground that they were still eligible for the open competitive examination under certain conditions, though in every other respect some of them have identical claims with those promoted; and, whether, as the number of writers thus affected is not large, and no restriction of the kind is contained in the Treasury Minute referred to, besides the large number of competitors in the open competition, which makes it impossible for more than one out of every 11 to succeed, the question of waiving the point will be favourably considered, with a view to having any such writer, whose case otherwise bears the necessary investigation, promoted?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): As the hon. Member is, no doubt, aware, entrance to the Lower Division of the Civil Service is by competitive examination; and if the standard of quality of the Lower Division is to be maintained, that condition must be observed. The limits of age in the competition for the Lower Division are 17 to 20; but copyists on the Civil Service Commission's Register are allowed a further period of five years, which is obviously a great advantage. The Committee which dealt with the case of the copyists deemed themselves precluded from inquiring into the work of any copyist who is still within the age at which he can compete.

WALES—THE TITHE AGITATION—EMERGENCY MEN.

MR. J. ROBERTS (Flint, &c.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, as it is admitted that the Solicitor to the Clergy Defence Association and the Emergency men in attendance upon him are in the habit of going to tithe seizures and sales in Wales armed, he will issue such instructions as will prevent their doing so in future?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): As far as my information goes, on only one occasion have the bailiffs gone armed to tithe seizures, and then for special reasons, which I have already stated. Under these circumstances, I see no necessity for issuing instructions on the subject, even if I had the power to do so.

MR. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire) asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman had made further inquiry with regard to the wearing of arms beyond that which had resulted in the answer given to the House on the 23rd of February?

MR. MATTHEWS replied that he had made no further inquiry.

MR. T. E. ELLIS asked that the right hon. Gentleman would do so; because information he had received showed that these bailiffs went about armed at every tithe sale and every tithe distress.

"THE BOARD OF TRADE JOURNAL" —MR. GIFFEN.

MR. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse) asked the President of the Board of Trade, If he can state whether Mr. Giffen, a paid official of his Department, is the principal proprietor of a paper called *The Board of Trade Journal;* if the use of the name of a great public Department gives an official character to the paper; whether the name was authorized by the Board of Trade; and, if the paper in question is largely supported by Government advertisements?

THE PRESIDENT (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): *The Board of Trade Journal* is the property of the Government, like every other publication of the Government, and neither Mr. Giffen nor any other official has any proprietary interest in it of any kind. *The Journal* is edited by the Commercial Department of the Board of Trade, of which Department Mr. Giffen is the head, and in that capacity he is one of the officers responsible for its production. The profits of *The Journal* are received by the Treasury, and no Government advertisements appear in it.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) asked, if it was not the case that Mr. Giffen edited *The Journal* without the receipt of any salary?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: Certainly. It is part of his official work.

IRELAND—THE LAW OFFICERS OF THE CROWN—THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND.

MR. A. E. PEASE (York) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What is the normal salary of the Attorney General for Ireland for non-contentious business; and, whether, in the case of the present Attorney General for Ireland, or any future Attorney General, the Government intend, as in the case of the late Attorney General, to adhere to the undertaking given by them that the salary should be fixed at £4,000, instead of £5,000?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The normal salary of the Attorney General for Ireland for non-contentious business is £5,000 a-year. The present Attorney General receives that salary, as did the late Attorney General. A Note will appear in the forthcoming Estimates to the effect that the salary is subject to revision; but no undertaking was ever given by the Government that the salary should be £4,000, instead of £5,000. Successive Irish Governments have expressed a strong opinion that the salary should not be less than £5,000 a-year, as appears from the printed Correspondence on the subject laid before the House.

MR. A. E. PEASE asked, if a letter had not passed between the Treasury and the Chief Secretary, in which £4,000 was fixed as the salary for the non-contentious business, with an exception in the case of the present Mr. Justice Holmes, the then Attorney General?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN said, the Correspondence would show that the only official who advocated £4,000 a-year was Sir Robert Hamilton, the then Permanent Under Secretary. Successive Chief Secretaries had been of opinion that £5,000 was not at all too much to be paid to the Attorney General for Ireland, and he was glad to say the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr. J. Morley) concurred in that view when he was Chief Secretary.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—COUNTY OF FERMANAGH.

MR. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If it is true that out of 81 magistrates in County Fermanagh there are only four Catholics; whether the Catholics are in a considerable majority in the population of the county; and, whether the Government intend to take any steps to remove the disparity which exists between the number of Catholic and Protestant magistrates?

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that Question, I beg to ask whether the Government intend to take any steps to hand over the bulk of the property, the intelligence, and the respectability of the Protestants of——

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, the first paragraph in the Question was correct. The proportion of Roman Catholics to Protestants in the county was as 56 to 50. When gentlemen who professed the religious creed of the majority of the population in any county in Ireland were possessed of the necessary qualifications for the Commission of the Peace, the Lord Chancellor was always especially anxious to consider favourably their appointment.

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1888—PREMATURE DELIVERY OF PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS.

MR. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, If he will explain how his statement in explanation of the Navy Estimates was published and commented on in the London and Provincial newspapers on Tuesday, although it was not delivered at the residence of any Member of the House till Wednesday; and, whether he can give an assurance that any Parliamentary Paper issuing from his Department will, in future, be communicated to all the Members of the House before it is communicated to the newspaper Press?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing), in reply, said, the Memorandum was ready for distribution to Members on Tuesday morning, and it was merely owing to the mistake of an official that the distribution did not take place. He had directed the attention of the Stationery Office to the delay, and steps would be taken to prevent its recurrence.

SAVING LIFE AT SEA—LEGISLATION.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the President of the Board of Trade, When the Saving Life at Sea Bill will be introduced, as promised?

THE PRESIDENT (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The Bill is ready, and will very shortly be introduced in the House of Lords.

SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES — REFORM AND ENDOWMENT.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether he can inform the House at what period of the Session the Government propose to introduce the Bill for the reform and better endowment of the Scottish Universities?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): It is proposed to introduce this Bill without delay. If the hon. Member will repeat his Question next week, I shall be able to give him a definite answer.

CRIMINAL LAW—FLOGGING.

MR. R. T. REID (Dumfries, &c.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he will exercise his power to prevent any sentence now pending from being carried into effect under which several successive floggings are to be inflicted on a prisoner within six months?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): No, Sir; it is not my intention to prevent pending sentences of flogging from being carried into effect, unless in any particular case good reasons can be shown which would justify my interference.

INDIA—WORKING OF THE LOCK HOSPITALS—REPORTS FOR 1885.

Mr. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether any of the following official Reports for the year 1885 are in the India Office:—namely, (1) Annual Report of the Punjaub Lock Hospitals; (2) Review of Chief Commissioner of Reports on Lock Hospitals in Central Provinces; (3) Annual Report of working of Secunderabad Lock Hospitals; (4) Report on Lock Hospitals, British Burmah; (5) Annual Report on Bengal Lock Hospitals; (6) Annual Report of the working of Lock Hospitals in the North-West Provinces and Oudh; whether, in these Reports, giving the Returns of venereal diseases among the British troops in India for 34 cantonments, in which the Contagious Diseases Act system has been uninterruptedly in force, an increase of disease, in general very marked, is shown in 22 cantonments in 1885 as compared with 1884, while the decrease in the other cantonments is very small; whether the India Office are in possession of information as to whether the following statement has been made by the medical officer of the Cantonment of Ranikhet:—

> "In addition to the medical officer's weekly examination of the women, daily examinations were made by the dhais. Every soldier admitted into the station hospital for venereal complaint was sent with a non-commissioned officer to identify, if possible, the woman with whom he had contracted disease. Any woman thus pointed out was immediately examined by the medical officer. In the great majority of instances the women so examined were found to be healthy;"

whether he can state the number of medical officers who have made similar statements; and, whether, if these Reports are not in the India Office, he will take immediate steps to obtain them?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir John Gorst) (Chatham): As Questions on this subject are becoming frequent, I trust the House will allow me to make such a statement as will, I hope, obviate the necessity for more. A letter from Umballa, which contains statements shocking to the moral and religious sentiments of many persons in this country, has been extensively circulated, and it is upon this letter that the Questions seemed, in the first instance, to be founded. I stated, at the outset, that the official information in the possession of the Secretary of State was at variance with this letter. Similar charges were made in 1873, and were officially denied by the Government of India. But I promised that the letter should be sent out to the Government of India, and that they should be requested to submit a detailed Report on the various allegations therein contained, and that, if anything like the practices alleged in the letter prevailed in India, measures would be taken to secure that any such practices should be stopped forthwith. As to the Acts for the repression of disease which are in force in various parts of India, the attention of the Government of India has been called to the strong representations made in this country against the maintenance of such Acts, and a full Report upon the entire subject has been asked for, and is expected shortly to arrive. But the Secretary of State has no power to withdraw this matter from the cognizance of the Legislative Council of the Governor General and the Legislatures of Madras and Bombay, to which the duty of making laws for India has been delegated by Parliament. Nor can he sanction any statement being made by me in the House of Commons which would prejudge that full consideration of the whole subject by the Secretary of State in Council, which will take place as soon as the Report referred to arrives Of the Reports mentioned in the Question all are in the India Office except No. 1, and, as I informed the hon. Member on Tuesday, No. 6. For the reasons already stated the Secretary of State declines to express any opinion at present upon the conclusions drawn by the hon. Member in the second paragraph of the Question. The Cantonment referred to in the third paragraph is in the North-West Provinces; and I have already twice stated that the Reports from this district have not been received. The Secretary of State does not consider it necessary to ask for further district Reports till the full Report now expected has been received.

LONDON COAL AND WINE DUTIES CONTINUANCE BILL—LEGISLATION.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the hon. Member for the Knutsford Division of Cheshire, as the Representative of the Metropolitan

Board of Works, Whether he can state when the London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance Bill will be printed and issued to Members; whether he is aware that what purport to be clauses in the Bill are now being circulated among Local Boards in the outside area; and, whether this is being done by the direction of the Metropolitan Board of Works?

MR. TATTON EGERTON (Cheshire, Knutsford), in reply, said, the Bill would be printed and distributed very shortly. Draft clauses had been distributed to the authorities of the Urban and Rural Sanitary Districts outside the Metropolitan area, but within the Metropolitan Police District, with the assent of the Metropolitan Board of Works.

METROPOLITAN POLICE—ALLEGED ASSAULTS.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the depositions taken at Bow Street in the Queen against John Coleman, John Fahy, John Wing, and Thomas John Hennessey, which contain the following words and figures, as evidence given in open Court on 18th November, 1887, before Mr. Vaughan by John Crawford:—

> "I was at the Police Station, Bow Street, locked up on a charge, and I saw Greenwood, 99 E, strike Coleman on the nose twice. It was between 3·55 p.m. and 4·30 p.m.;"

whether the office copy of such deposition was obtained by the Solicitor to the Treasury, and on what date; and, whether the Solicitor and Counsel for the Treasury were both present in Court when the evidence was given?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I have seen the deposition of John Crawford, which is correctly quoted, except that the word "twice" does not occur in it. The office copy of such deposition was received by the Treasury Solicitor on the 23rd of November. Neither the Solicitor to the Treasury, nor anyone representing him, nor Counsel for the Treasury were present in the Court at Bow Street; but a clerk from the Treasury Solicitor's Department and the Counsel instructed by him were present on December 9, 1887, when Coleman was convicted at the Middlesex Sessions and sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment with hard labour.

NORWAY—TENDER FOR COAL SUPPLY.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether any notice has been received at the Foreign Office, asking for tender for coal supply, from Her Majesty's Consul General for Norway; and, whether such notice contains the names of the collieries from which the supply is desired; if so, whether it is the intention of the Government to forward such tender, or to leave it to open competition?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Such a notice has been received, and has been published; it does not contain the names of any particular collieries.

BURGH POLICE AND HEALTH (SCOTLAND) BILL.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Lord Advocate, If he will inform the House of the number of clauses in the Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) Bill which prescribe penalties, the range of the pecuniary penalties enacted, and the range of the terms of imprisonment prescribed in default of payment; if he will state the number of specific offences for which penalties are prescribed in the Bill; if he will state how many of the proposed offences are offences under the present Common Law or General Statute Law of Scotland; and, if he will take steps to enable Members to distinguish between the consolidating and the amending provisions of the Bill by printing the amending portions separately, in the form of a Memorandum?

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.) asked, whether it would be possible to mark by an asterisk the portions of the Bill which contained new law?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The Bill to which the hon. Member refers is the same as that which has been before the House during several previous Sessions, and is practically the same as regards penalties, whether of fine or imprisonment. I would suggest to my hon. Friend that the details of a Bill before the House are hardly matter for answer at Question time. I shall consider whether a Memorandum distinguishing by number the consolidating and amending clauses could be made up; but I cannot undertake to have so large a Bill reprinted in great part in a separate form. With reference to the Question of the hon. Member for Aberdeen, I will consider whether the making up of such a Memorandum as he suggests can be carried into effect.

Dr. CAMERON asked, whether it was the fact that this Bill had been amended in the House of Lords, or was it the same as when before the Commons? Was it not the fact that the Bill contained about 250 clauses, enacting penalties in respect of specific offences to the average of at least 10, making 2,000 or 3,000? Did not the penalties range up to £50, and the period of imprisonment to three months? Would the Lord Advocate consider the possibility of doing what was done in the case of the Public Health (Ireland) Bill, where the *précis* was put at the side showing where the clauses were got from?

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD: I have already said I shall endeavour to meet the wishes of my hon. Friend with reference to the number of clauses. If he will confer with me, I will be glad to consider anything he might suggest for the purpose of facilitating the decision of the Bill?

Dr. CAMERON: Can the right hon. and learned Gentleman give any idea of the number of penalties?

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD: It never entered my mind to total up the number of penalties. I think the real way of dealing with the question of penalties is to consider whether, in each case, the subject of the penalty is a proper one or not?

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked, whether the Bill was to be compulsory in the smaller burghs?

[No reply.]

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1887—FIELD ARTILLERY.

Sir HENRY HAVELOCK-ALLAN (Durham, S.E.) asked the Secretary of State for War, with reference to the Army Estimates of 1887, Whether any progress has been made, and, if so, what, in carrying out the increase of the Field Artillery in guns, men, and horses, and in the formation of the 14 ammunition columns, on the understanding of the proposed increase to which the House was asked last year to assent, to the great reduction of the effective force of the Horse Artillery, which was then stated to be essential to economy?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The Field Artillery has been increased by three batteries; while 14 batteries, which, as was fully explained last year, might be converted on mobilization for foreign service into ammunition columns, have been reduced to the peace establishment of men, horses, and guns. But the Field Batteries for the First and Second Army Corps have been raised to the strength necessary for field service on mobilization.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether there is any increase, and, if so, what are the number of guns on the peace establishment of the Army?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: Would the noble Lord allow me to say that that is a matter to be explained in debate.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: That is a matter of fact.

Mr. E. STANHOPE: If the noble Lord will put this Question to me in the course of the debate, I will be very glad to give an answer to it. It involves many other points which cannot be dealt with in answer to a Question.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: The simple question is, whether there are more guns or fewer guns? and that is a question of fact.

Mr. E. STANHOPE: This point arises at once—Does the noble Lord mean guns for the service of the Horse and Field Batteries, or does he mean, in addition, guns in reserve?

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: Guns for service.

Mr. E. STANHOPE: Obviously the noble Lord raises a matter for debate.

Sir HENRY HAVELOCK-ALLAN: Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether or not there has been any actual increase in the number of guns and horses on the peace establishment of the Artillery?

MR. E. STANHOPE: No, Sir; there has been no increase in the number of guns of the Horse Artillery.

SIR HENRY HAVELOCK-ALLAN: In the Field Artillery?

MR. E. STANHOPE: Yes, Sir; there have been three Field Batteries added.

CAPTAIN COTTON (Cheshire, Wirral): Arising out of this Question, I should like to ask whether the Field Batteries of the First and Second Army Corps are completed up to war establishment?

MR. E. STANHOPE: No, Sir. That is a totally different Question, as my hon. and gallant Friend must know perfectly well.

POST OFFICE—SUPPLY OF CLOTHING TO FIRST-CLASS POSTMEN.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) asked the Postmaster General, Whether his attention has been called to the Circular of 21st February, 1888, No. 661, and to the entry therein, that first-class postmen employed in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin are to have two suits of uniform in each year, whilst first-class postmen employed in Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, and other cities have only one suit of uniform in each year; and, what is the reason for the difference?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): It has long been the practice to supply postmen employed in the three Metropolitan Offices with two suits of uniform in each year, and to supply the men in the Provinces with one suit every eight months. The issue of a light suit to the latter class every alternate year, with a winter suit every year, will in no way lessen the total amount of clothing hitherto supplied. It will thus be seen that the arrangement described in the Circular referred to by the hon. Member, which was issued only for the information of the officers of the Department, makes no change in the existing relations between the postmen in London, Dublin, and Edinburgh, and those employed in Provincial offices. Any exception to this arrangement could scarcely be confined to Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham.

POST OFFICE—DEDUCTION OF PAY—GLASGOW AND MANCHESTER.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) asked the Postmaster General, Whether it is the case that when Post Officials are off duty through sickness one-half of the pay is deducted in the case of Glasgow, whilst only one-third of the pay is deducted in the case of Manchester; and, whether there is any reason for giving this greater advantage to Manchester over Glasgow?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): Yes, Sir; such is the case. The more favourable Rule in operation in Manchester is one of old standing, and applies to two or three Provincial offices only. It would not be practicable to extend it to the Service generally, although such a privilege in the case of a particular office appears to me invidious, and only to be excused on the ground of having been long recognized.

MOROCCO—FOREIGN PROTECTION.

SIR JOHN SIMON (Dewsbury) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the subject of protection in Morocco will be one of the subjects for consideration at the proposed Conference at Madrid, and how is it proposed to deal with it; will it be discontinued entirely, or only modified; and, if it is to be discontinued, what will be substituted for it on behalf of those in whose favour it has hitherto existed?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The request of the Moorish Government for a modification of existing Treaty stipulations in regard to foreign protection will be considered in the approaching Conference. No preliminary decision has been come to respecting the abolition or modification of such protectorates; and no opinion can now be given upon the measures which might be expedient in an altered state of circumstances, until the proposals of the Conference have been made upon the case to be submitted to them.

THAMES CONSERVANCY BOARD—COMPOSITION.

MR. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether, in view of the large commercial and traffic interests connected with the Port of London, he will consider the desirability of nominating, on the first vacancy for the Thames Conservancy Board, some Member of this

House representing a riparian constituency?

THE PRESIDENT (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): Five of the members of the Thames Conservancy Board are appointed by the Corporation of the City of London, and six others are elected by the commercial and traffic interests to which my hon. Friend, I presume, refers. The Board of Trade can only nominate two of the 23 members, so that I cannot give such an undertaking as my hon. Friend desires, though, of course, on a vacancy his suggestion will be considered.

TRUCK AMENDMENT ACT—SERVANTS IN HUSBANDRY.

MR. C. T. D. ACLAND (Cornwall, Launceston) asked Mr. Attorney General, Whether the Truck Amendment Act of last Session renders it illegal for farmers and other employers of servants in husbandry to make a custom of giving regularly to such servants in husbandry intoxicating liquors as a remuneration for services, in such a manner that such servants might be led to expect, without any express contract, that such liquor would be supplied to them gratis all through hay or corn harvest, or at any other season of the year?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): It is in every case a question of fact whether giving intoxicating liquor is expressly or by implication a part of the contract of service. No other general answer can be given to the hon. Member's Question.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—PROCLAIMED MEETING AT YOUGHAL.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I wish to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland a Question of which I have given him private Notice—Whether it is true that a large force of extra police and military has been suddenly drafted into the town of Youghal; and, if so, with what object?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I have no official information about the extra police being drafted into Youghal; but as a meeting in Youghal has been proclaimed, whose object was to celebrate the death of Hanlon in an encounter between the police and the people, it is possible that the police authority thought it was necessary to take precautions to preserve the peace, and that is the fact to which the hon. Gentleman alludes.

MR. DILLON: Can the right hon. Gentleman inform the House on what grounds the Government acted?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: As the object of the meeting was to celebrate the anniversary of the encounter between the people and the police, the hon. Gentleman will see that the object was not calculated to preserve the peace.

THE EMPEROR OF GERMANY.

MR. HULSE (Salisbury) asked, Whether the Government were in a position to make any communication to the House with reference to the Emperor of Germany?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I greatly regret to say that the information which the Government have received is not of a re-assuring character, and that His Imperial Majesty appears to be in a very critical condition.

CIVIL SERVICE (IRELAND)—ACTION OF AN OFFICIAL.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to a letter published to-day by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright), recommending to the country a pamphlet by an Irish barrister named Brougham Leech, which is to be had, price 3*d.*, at Ridgeway's, Piccadilly, on *The Continuity of the Irish Revolutionary Movement;* whether Leech is Examiner of Title to the Irish Land Purchase Commission, at a salary of £1,000 a-year; and, whether the Government approves of one of the officials of this Department becoming a Primrose Pamphleteer, and attacking the political objects of one of the great Parties in the State?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I am sorry to say I have not seen the letter nor the pamphlet.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I beg to give Notice that on the Estimates for the salary of this gentleman, who is paid by taxpayers of all opinions, I will call attention to this gentleman debasing his position by Party action, and to the fact that Mr. George Fottrell, when Solicitor to the Land Commission in 1882, was dismissed by Mr. Forster for publishing a pamphlet merely recommending tenants to buy their farms.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [5th March], "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair" (for Committee of Supply).

And which Amendment was,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty praying that, in order accurately to ascertain our position, She may be graciously pleased to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into and report upon the requirements for the protection of the Empire."—(*Sir Walter Barttelot.*)

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed.*

PROTECTION OF THE EMPIRE.

[ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): In rising to take part in this debate I must ask the indulgence of the House for two reasons—in the first place, because I am afraid that I shall greatly exceed the limit permitted by those who think, and who think rightly, that speeches should never exceed 20 minutes in duration; and, secondly, because, although I have been in the House of Commons for a not altogether inconsiderable period, this is the first occasion on which I have ever taken part in a debate on Army matters, with the exception of a few unimportant remarks in the Committee of Supply last year. On Monday the House commenced a debate of unusual importance, and I think I am right in saying that since the great debates on Army Organization, which will be well within the recollection of the right hon. Gentleman opposite—the debates which took place in 1869, 1870, and 1871—we have had no such debates in the House of Commons so important as the one which the House is now engaged in carrying on. An important Motion has been brought before the House, and I think the House will act wisely if it endeavours to arrive at what I may call the real meaning of that Motion. *Primâ facie* the Motion, as appears from its wording, is a demand for a Royal Commission to inquire into the requirements for the protection of the Empire. That is a meaning to which I attach comparatively minor importance; the real meaning I hold to be that it is a concerted and combined action on the part of those who, without any impropriety, may be regarded as the direct and trusted Representatives of the two Services in this House in order to stop your leaving the Chair, Sir, for the purpose of the House going into Committee on the Army Estimates. The meaning of the Motion appears to me to be this. It is a great and loud cry raised by the Representatives of the Services—a cry of alarm at our present condition as regards offensive and defensive preparations; it is a great and loud cry of intense distress at the present condition of our military organization. There is one feature about this Parliament which is worthy of notice. I doubt whether in any former Parliament the Services have been so strongly represented as they are in the present House. I do not wish the House to be led away into any discussion as to whether that is a wise arrangement or not. By consulting a work which is in favour with hon. Gentlemen opposite, and which I have no reason to suppose is incorrect, I find that the Services are represented more or less directly in the House by no less than 178 Members; therefore the strength of the representation of the Services is most unusual, and probably has never been equalled or even approached in any previous Parliament, and may possibly never be equalled again. What happened on Monday night? Many speakers addressed the House, and of all the speakers who addressed the House, and who all, except one, belonged to the Services, and may be said to have represented the Services, every single Member who spoke was agreed with every other Member who represented the Services in assailing the position Her Majesty's Government had taken up with regard to this Motion. There can be no question among us, as practical and reasonable beings, that on all questions of technical administration and management the authority of the Representatives of the Services must stand high. What was the most remarkable and will continue to be the most remarkable feature was the absolute unanimity which characterized the declarations of hon. and gallant Gentlemen who represent the Services. Unanimity has not always characterized the Representatives of the Services. There have been great divisions with reference to the Army; one hon. Member would advocate a particular reform and was contradicted by another; and if you take the great debates on Army Organization which characterized the years I have before alluded to—I mean the debates on the introduction of Short Service and the abolition of Purchase—you find a sharp division of military opinion on the merits and demerits of those reforms. The bulk of Army opinion was against them, but there were many distinguished soldiers who sided with the Government of the day and advocated the reforms. The unanimity which you now have among the Representatives of the Services with regard to the merits of this particular Motion is almost unparalleled, and is, I think, worthy the attention of the House. The Motion before the House deals with absolute matters of fact—that is its peculiar feature. There is absolute unanimity among the Representatives of the Services as to the matters which they allege to be facts. In connection with this point, I should like to allude to the speech of the Financial Secretary on Monday night. Nothing is more easy to criticize for the purpose of taking debating advantage than the speeches made in this House by those whom I may call soldiers and sailors. They are men not of words, but of action; and we may take it that, with the brilliant exception of the hon. and gallant Member for Birkenhead (General Hamley), nothing is more easy than to take debating advantage of the speeches made by them in the House of Commons. The Financial Secretary would have done well if he had recollected that fact before administering the severe snubbing he did to the Representatives of the Army on Monday night. He should have remembered that hon. and gallant Gentlemen who addressed the House were speaking on matters with which they were directly and intimately acquainted, and that it was only by the exercise of politeness, charity, and a vigorous imagination that they could attribute to the hon. Gentleman himself a similar knowledge. With respect to the speeches of the Representatives of the Service, I would wish the House to draw, as I do, a very broad distinction between the statements of fact which hon. and gallant Gentlemen put before the House, and the remedies which they propose for the grievances which they allege to exist. They, one and all, by different arguments and by different allegations, asserted our position, from a military point of view, to be in a deplorable and unsatisfactory condition, and that notwithstanding the immense and increasing expenditure which the House has been called upon to defray in respect of the Army of this country. It would certainly appear, from some of the speeches made, that the only remedy proposed was that we should spend more money. I am not prepared to say that is their remedy; but if it is, I am at issue with them. My remedy, if their statements of fact are true, is—"Reform your system." If you reform your system, I am convinced that the money which is spent now will be amply sufficient, and more than amply sufficient, to maintain your Army in a fairly efficient and satisfactory condition. Let the House consider the nature of our system of military organization. There is one feature about it which is absolutely unparalleled in any other country in the world. No other country has a military system at all approaching ours, and that drives us to one of two conclusions. Either our system is so good that no other country can at all approach it, or it is so bad that no other country would adopt any part of it. The House can form an opinion for itself as to which is likely to be the case. The system is this—it is a most curious mixture of civil and military elements, the great feature of which is that the civil element predominates over the military, which is subordinate to the civil. The consequence is that the responsibility to Parliament is laid upon the civil element alone, and altogether taken away from the military element. There is no connection whatever between the military heads of the Army and the Parliament of this country. That, I believe, is a correct statement of our military system; and not only is there no approach to it in other countries, but our military system, compared with that of other countries, is very costly. Now, Sir, we are told by the Representatives of the Services in this House, speaking with responsibility and authority, that this system, which costs more than any other system, is useless, and worse than useless; it is a mischievous system, which gives no results in the shape of the military preparations which the country has a right to expect. That that is the result is not a matter of surprise. You have made arrangements by which military men, who from their youth have studied and mastered all the intricacies of military service, are placed in direct subordination to civilians, who have had no such training, and who, from the necessity of the case, are incapable of acquiring it. You apply to the Army a system which I venture to say you would not uphold and maintain in any other case. I will draw a homely analogy. Supposing the Prime Minister of this country were to select the senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) to be the head of the Church of England, and were to appoint him Archbishop of Canterbury, or supposing he were to select the right hon. Member for Sleaford (Mr. Chaplin) to be head of the Legal Profession and make him Lord Chancellor, the result would be that the public mind would be shocked by such appointments. A man who made such appointments ought to be placed under legal restraint. But that which is supposed to be an insane action in ecclesiastical or in legal matters is regarded as a perfectly sane act in the management of military affairs. Not only are military training, military life, and military experience not required in the case of War Office appointments, but I believe I do not go too far when I say that military training, military life, and military experience are almost a disqualification for official appointments at the War Office. In what I am about to say I do not propose to throw any blame upon the present Secretary for War. When the present Secretary for War was appointed he endeavoured to put an end to the many curious anomalies which undoubtedly prevailed in his Department. The Secretary of State, in his Statement on the Army Estimates, has mentioned certain reforms which he has adopted for the purpose of relieving the civil authority of the control over the Army. The Secretary of State regarded that as a primary feature of re-organization. What strikes me, however, is that by this so-called reform certain offices have been abolished and others have been set up in their places, and the heads of the abolished Departments have been placed in other positions. That is the character, as a rule, of War Office re-organizations. The Secretary for War has abolished the offices of Director and Assistant Director of Supplies and Transport, which were formerly respectively filled by Sir A. Haliburton and by Mr. Lawson at salaries of £1,200 and of £1,000 per annum. But although these gentlemen ceased to exist in their former characters, they now re-appear—resurrected as it were—Sir A. Haliburton as Assistant Under Secretary for War, with a salary of £1,200 per annum, and Mr. Lawson as Assistant Deputy Accountant General, at a salary of £1,000 per annum? Will the House believe that there was already in existence an Assistant Under Secretary for War, at a salary of £1,500 per annum, in the person of Colonel Deedes, who has no duty to perform except to look after the messengers at the War Office, and who has now the aid of Sir A. Haliburton to assist him in the discharge of that laborious work? There were already in existence two Assistant Deputy Accountant Generals, one with £1,200 and the other £1,000 a-year; but they apparently are not sufficient to discharge the duties of their office, and Mr. Lawson has been appointed to assist them with a salary of £1,000 per annum. That is not all. In the place of the Surveyor General of the Ordnance Department two new offices have been created. There has been created a Director of Ordnance Factories, and the gentleman who holds that office is General Maitland, who was formerly one of the Superintendents of the Gun Factories at a salary of £950. His salary is now doubled, and he receives £1,800 a-year, and what is more remarkable, although I have nothing personal to say against the gallant officer, is that he was singled out by the Commission, presided over by Sir James Stephen, as being mainly, if not entirely, responsible for the manufacture of the ill-fated 43-ton guns. The Secretary for War, in the course of his Statement, used the following language:—

> "Among the advantages which I anticipate from this alteration, I place first the fact that the Military Authorities will now be enabled to take a comprehensive view of the whole condition of the military resources of the country, of our requirements, and of the means available for meeting them. All the threads are in their own hands. Any scheme put forward by them should be founded upon full knowledge of all surrounding conditions, and the Secretary of State will be enabled to rely upon them for advice as to the comparative importance of all proposals for Army expenditure."

In view of that statement, what I wish to ask is whether the Commander-in-Chief and his great Military Advisers were parties to that paragraph in his published statement? Are they aware of the increased responsibility which has been thrown upon them, and are they willing to accept that increased responsibility? Do they admit that they have greater power than formerly? If not, and if the statement is a mere expression of the opinion of the Secretary for War, with all due respect to him, it is not worth the paper it is printed upon. The Secretary for War says that all the management of the Army is in the hands of the Military Authorities. That is quite contrary to the facts. The most important matters connected with Army administration, such as those relating to contracts for clothing and manfacturing ordnance, are absolutely removed from the knowledge of the Commander-in-Chief; and, that being so, I fail to see how all the great Army administration is in the hands of the Military Authorities. Now I come to a much more important question—that relating to the Estimates. Under the Order in Council which created the present Office of Commander-in-Chief, the duties of that officer were greatly enlarged, and the Commander-in-Chief was charged with the duty of preparing these Estimates. If the House turns to the duty of the Financial Secretary to the War Office, they will find that he is charged with the duty of compiling the Estimates. Will the Secretary of State draw a distinction between preparing and compiling the Estimates? Does compiling really mean adding up the Commander-in-Chief's figures to see whether he has made any mistake in his arithmetic, or does it mean going over the Estimates, reducing some amounts fixed by the Commander-in-Chief and increasing others? That is a most important point. If you have not given any financial control to the Military Authorities you have not increased their responsibility nor their control over the Army. The control over the Army depends upon financial control; and if the Commander-in-Chief has nothing to do with the preparation of the Estimates matters are left exactly where they were before. That argument is incapable of being contradicted, but in spite of this the Secretary of State says that now, for the first time, he has been able to rely on the Military Authorities. That is a most extraordinary statement. I altogether deny its accuracy, and I assert, if former Secretaries of State have not been able to rely on their Military Advisers, nothing which takes place in the War Office will enable the Secretary of State to rely upon them now. I would like with regard to our present position, and with regard to this question of military responsibility and military control, to read to the House some extracts from the evidence given before the Royal Commission by a witness of the highest authority. Lord Wolseley, in his evidence last year as to the civil establishments, used these most remarkable expressions, which are well worthy of the serious consideration of the House of Commons. In reply to Question 2,473, Lord Wolseley said—

> "The tendency of all our military administration, so far as I have been able to judge of it, has been to make military men extravagant, has been to make them spending animals instead of economical animals. You have divided the great administration of the Army into the military and into the civil, and you have strictly reserved to the civil branches everything connected with finance and everything bearing upon economy. The result is, as might be expected from such a system, that the Military Commander and his Staff consider that they have absolutely no responsibility about money, and in all the demands and requests they make for stores or for money they do not think of economy, having been taught that the economical side of the question is entirely to be dealt with by the financial people in the War Office. Whereas, according to my notions, if you threw upon officers commanding districts and all the stations throughout the world a certain amount of financial responsibility, you would make them very anxious to economize for the Public Service; their reputation would then be at stake, and they would hesitate before they made any extravagant demands."

In reply to Question 2,528, Lord Wolseley said—

> "My experience is that when soldiers are trusted, as I have seen them, as Governors and in that sort of position abroad they are more particular about public money and more economical than anyone else."

In reply to Question 2,529, Lord Wolseley said—

> "Now if the officer is economical he gets no credit for it. He is looked upon as a fool."

That is one of the results of your curious military system. Now, Sir, these are Lord Wolseley's statements before a Royal Commission. But he gave further evidence as to the effect of placing a civilian in a responsible position over military men. In reply to Question 2,250, Lord Wolseley said—

> "I think it a very ridiculous thing to bring a gentleman into the War Office and make him responsible for supplying the Army with the most important implements they have to make use of, their arms, great guns, &c., who may be absolutely ignorant of everything connected with war, or the requirements of war, or the stores made use of in war."

In reply to Question 2,460, he said—

> "I think that the amount of effective work, as far as the Army is concerned, that a Parliamentary gentleman coming into the War Officeo an do is very small. I do not think the public have any very great return for the salary he receives. He brings no special knowledge to bear upon any of the very difficult subjects he is asked to deal with. He is the fifth wheel of the coach. The only thing I know he really can do is to answer Questions in the House. If he interferes with people he has to deal with he interferes with the efficiency of the Army, and if he does not interfere with them, what good is he, and for what purpose is he there?"

Lord Wolseley thought that Parliamentary Gentlemen could answer Questions in the House of Commons; could the Secretary of State answer the last question put by Lord Wolseley? It is only fair to say that the statement was made about the Surveyor General. Lord Wolseley, who had been through many campaigns and who was a G.C.B., being subordinate to the Secretary of State and dependent on the Secretary of State for his existence, could not apply that language to his official superior; but I am putting no extravagant construction on Lord Wolseley's words if I were to say—*Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur.* I trust these extracts I am reading will not weary the House, but the opinions of Lord Wolseley are extremely important. Lord Wolseley contrasts our system with the German system, and that is a very important matter. Lord Wolseley, in answer to Question 2,338, said:—

> "Germany is divided into 19 Army Corps, and each Army Corps is as independent almost as England is of Ireland. It has its own establishment, its own headquarters, and its own storage accommodation. It has its own transport and everything complete, and there is allotted to it, to the General Officer commanding, so much money on an estimate, and he manipulates the whole thing, and is responsible to whoever is the financial man at the financial headquarters."

Thus we see that the German system is in direct opposition to our own. For the moment I leave the matter there, in order to relate an interesting experience of my own. When I passed through Berlin the other day, I was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of a captain of one of the regiments of Hussars. He was good enough to offer to show me all of what I may call the domestic economy of his regiment. I may mention that this officer was a man of high station, the heir to a great fortune. That officer went to his regiment every morning at 6 o'clock, remaining with it until 12, when he left. He returned to his regiment at 1 o'clock, and never left it until 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening. That is the way in which the Prussian Army works. The reason of the greater efficiency of that Army is because of the responsibility which the German system puts on the officer, as I shall show the House. The German officer has not only military control, but also financial control; and the manner in which an officer manages his regiment and the finances of his regiment is the measure of his promotion. Well, what did this officer show me? He showed me the whole of the squadron of about 150 men in all its working. That squadron was complete in every single particular. The whole of the money for the maintenance of the regiment was allotted to the colonel of the regiment, who, with the five captains of the five squadrons, dealt with that money entirely as they thought fit. They made their own contracts, bought their own supplies, purchased all their articles, except horses and actual stores and guns. He showed me the storehouse of the squadron. There were in it duplicates, triplicates, and all the stages beyond triplicates of every single article of equipment or accoutrement which a

Cavalry regiment could possibly want. There were three or four suits of clothes, three or four sets of pouches and helmets; in fact, they had every sort of thing in their storehouse in duplicate and in triplicate. Will the House believe that the great rivalry between regiments in Germany is not to spend, but to economize money, so that their stores may be better and greater in extent than the squadron of any other regiment? That is the result of putting financial power in the hands of a soldier; and it is a fact that every Prussian regiment going to war is turned out with every article brand new from beginning to end. That regiment of which I am speaking could have gone at 12 hours' notice, and not one single letter of any sort or kind need have passed between them and the War Office. I venture to state that not one single regiment could be moved in this country without reams and files and folios of correspondence, extending over a period of several days, and that is your system and your military efficiency. I have given to the House an instance of a Prussian regiment, and from one instance you may learn all. They are all alike. I give the House now an instance of an English regiment which also came under my personal notice last year. An officer commanding one of our crack Cavalry regiments required for his regiment new ammunition pouches. He applied for them, and after a time he got them. When he got them, however, he found that the straps across the shoulders were so weak that when the pouches were full of ammunition the straps broke, and the ammunition tumbled out. This defect was brought to the notice of the War Office, but at first they did not believe it. There was a long correspondence, but at last the War Office replied and admitted that they were bad, and new pouches were sent. When they arrived, it was found that they would not hold the regulation quantity of cartridges. Again the colonel commanding brought the matter to the notice of the War Office, who were most indignant and perfectly incredulous. A prolonged correspondence ensued with the War Office, but at last a solemn inspection was made of those pouches, and the statement was found to be correct. The colonel told me only the other day that, after a correspondence extending over more than a year, he had at last succeeded in getting a crack Cavalry regiment proper ammunition pouches. From that you may get a most perfect picture of the beauties of the German and English systems. That is an instance which may not be contradicted. But the absurdities of the War Office are worthy of a moment's notice. Lord Wolseley, in his evidence, stated to the Royal Commission that a man in Canada who had claimed on the War Office for 2*s.* 6*d.* had to sign his name 19 different times for it. In the Report by the Committee which audits the accounts of the Woolwich factory there is a passage as to the query sheet. On the question of payments made, it had to be signed or initialled by no fewer than eight persons, and after one year's labour of those eight persons in reference to this particular question the result was a total disallowance of 2*s.* 4*d.* Then, in another passage, Lord Wolseley speaks of the many signatures required, and says that "much labour is bestowed on most trifling amounts." But what does Lord Wolseley say with regard to his own work? Here is what the Adjutant General of the Army says—

> "Taking my own work, there is such an immense amount of small work that, instead of having time for serious and big subjects, one's time is taken up in reading stupid little papers upon stupid little subjects. There is an immense amount of routine which ought to be avoided."

["Hear, hear!"] If the Secretary of State for War is kind enough to cheer me when I read that statement, I should have thought it would have been better to deal with matters such as this, rather than with matters which mean mainly the creation of new appointments. Well, that is how Lord Wolseley describes the working of the system, and now I should like to tell the House what are the results of the system. Lord Wolseley says—

> "I think we move our troops a great deal too much, and that an immense amount of money is spent uselessly upon the movement of troops continually all over the world."

Then I will quote Lord Wolseley about the supplies of the Army. He says, in answer to Question 2,267—

> "During my time in the Army we have not been supplied with as good material as we ought to have been supplied with. I think, for instance, the tools supplied to the Army are very bad, extremely bad, taking them generally. The picks, shovels, axes, and all those descriptions of stores are very bad."

This, mind you, is the evidence of the Adjutant General of the Army. With regard to the clothing of our troops, Lord Wolseley says—

> "I have seen the French Army, the soldiers of the German, and the soldiers of the Italian Army, and, looking at the clothing, I should say that their clothing is made of a decidedly superior quality to what ours is."

I hope that the House will bear that in mind. If the German Army were to be clothed at the same rate of expense as our Army, that would add £300,000 to their expenditure. Then, again, Lord Wolseley says, in answer to question 2,510—

> "I am quite sure that if you sent to-morrow for a implement called a billhook, the common billhook that is used in the Army, you will find that it is made of very inferior stuff, little better than hoop-iron. If you chop wood with it, the wood chops it."

That is the statement of a man who is speaking of his own experience, and it is a statement which was only made last year. But there is one more statement made by Lord Wolseley which is even more important. In answer to Question 2,443 he says—

> "I think that one of the most important elements in regimental efficiency is regimental transport, and one of the greatest misfortunes which our Army suffers from at the present moment is that we have not got even the nucleus of any regimental transport. Of all the troubles we suffer from when we take the field the want of any regimental transport is the greatest."

Now I have given to the House some of the results of our curious system, which the Government do not seem to wish inquired into. But there are other results which have met with a great chorus of military condemnation. Some right hon. Gentlemen will recollect the Crimean War. What was the great feature of that war? The great feature was that while the British soldier was covered with glory, the civil administration was covered with the deepest disgrace. But take the series of scandals in the last few years. Besides the scandals connected with the swords and bayonets of the Army and the cutlasses of the Navy, and that connected with the 43-ton gun, there appears to me to be a very unpleasant business at the present moment about what is known as the 9·2-inch gun. We have not quite arrived at the truth about it, but the Secretary of State for War assured the House that a gun with a cracked lining is a better one than a gun with a lining which is not cracked. These are matters on which we have not yet full information, but look at the Commissariat scandal in Egypt—that terrible and unequalled scandal in connection with the column in the desert. It is not that I want to irritate the authorities by placing upon them the responsibility for these matters; I place the responsibility on the system. The system which has produced these results is the same which has obtained up to the present time, and not in the slightest, in the most trifling particular, has that system been altered; it is as powerful for evil now as it was then. We are told that there is Parliamentary control, but what has Parliament ever done to bring any single person to justice for these scandals? Why, my hon. Friend the Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury) is going to bring before the House a Motion concerning the supply of leather. What will happen? He will make a strong and convincing speech, and he will receive a official reply, which will be to shield everybody, and my hon. Friend will find himself in a small minority. We have seen over and over again what is the use of Parliamentary control. We have been told that with regard to the number of field guns we cannot do what Switzerland, Belgium, Servia, or Roumania could do with ease. But a very serious statement was made by the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone (Lord Charles Beresford), which, I think, was a "calculated indiscretion," but which was of enormous value to the House. The noble Lord states—and it rests with the Secretary for War to admit or deny it, and not only that, but to prove his denial—that we had no gunpowder in store, and were obliged to depend for our gunpowder upon manufactories in a foreign country. I do not know whether the noble Lord referred to cocoa powder used for our heavy guns, but he has stated that there was not sufficient in store.

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD (Marylebone, E.): I said that there was not a sufficient amount in store to meet what would be requisite if we went to war.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: At all events, we have a statement of such importance as that made by the noble Lord, who was in Office only a very short time ago, and who must be in a position to know. Certainly the House of Commons has never refused to vote money for the purpose. Now, may I ask the House to judge the system from an Army point of view—that is to say, compare its cost with that of the German system? Such a comparison is very interesting and full of lessons for us. We have the evidence of one of the most distinguished officers in the British Army—namely, General Brackenbury, the head of the Intelligence Department. We examined him as to the cost of the German system. I think it will be admitted that the German system is nearly an ideal system, and that the more nearly we approach to it, the more likely is our system to be a satisfactory one. General Brackenbury stated one thing which is most remarkable. He gave the cost of the German War Office and of our own. Our War Office costs exactly £400,000 a year; it contains 693 officials, and manages an Army which, on a war footing, may be considered as amounting to 500,000 men. The German War Office costs £160,000; it includes the War Ministry of Bavaria, of Saxony, and of Wurtemberg; and there are only 503 officials. The German War Office, with this small proportion of expenditure, manages to control an Army which, on a war footing, amounts to upwards of 3,000,000 men. Those are broad facts, however they may be explained away by official ingenuity. Now let us look at the cost in the two cases. The expenses of the German Army system last year were £21,000,000, or, deducting the Non-Effective Vote, £19,300,000, as compared with £14,600,000, the expenses of the British system, after deducting its Non-Effective Vote. I asked General Brackenbury whether he did not consider that the best test of any organization was the number of Army Corps which could be put into the field after making the various necessary allowances, and General Brackenbury agreed that it was. Well, for an effective cost of £19,300,000 Germany can put into the field 19 Army Corps; we are supposed to be able to put into the field two Army Corps for the sum of £14,600,000, making the cost of each Army Corps £7,000,000, as against £1,000,000 in the case of Germany. General Brackenbury said that that was a most unfair comparison; that it must be recollected we have a Volunteer Army; that it is much better paid, fed, and clothed than the German Army; and that if the German Army were paid, fed, and clothed in the same way their expenditure would be much higher. I was not afraid to follow the General on that ground, and I asked him to add on what that expenditure would be if the German Army were paid, fed, and clothed as well as the British Army. I found that to the £19,300,000 should be added £6,650,000 in respect of pay, £1,300,000 for better food, for clothing £300,000, and for the item of forage £373,000, making a total altogether, if the pay, bed, clothing, and forage of the German Army were in the same style as ours, of £27,900,000. I add on something more. The German war authorities, no doubt, possess a fund over which Parliament has no control in the indemnity which was paid by France in the last war. Out of this Military Chest they have constructed enormous fortifications, and added largely to their supply of military stores. Still, it would probably be extravagant to say that they take out of the Military Chest more than £2,000,000. Therefore, by adding on to the £27,900,000 the sum of £2,000,000 as contribution from the Military Chest we get a total of £30,000,000. So that for £30,000,000, even supposing their Army were kept up on the more extravagant style of the British Army, the Germans can send into the field 19 Army Corps, as against £14,600,000 for our two Army Corps, making the cost of each German Army Corps about £1,500,000, as against an English cost per corps of £7,000,000. I think those are startling figures, which must attract the attention of the House and the public. You may say what you like, but there must be something wrong with a system which shows results so miserably inadequate as compared with those of other military systems. I cannot pass away from this subject without reminding the House that Germany has, moreover, 17 first-class fortresses, military camps they might be called, in such condition that they are ready at the shortest notice for any emergency; and that she maintains her Army in the most perfect equipment, ready to cross the frontier at a fortnight's notice. As for our fortresses, what have we? We have only four first-class fortresses—Portsmouth, Plymouth, Gibraltar, and Malta—and we are told in the Memorandum of the Secretary of State that every one of those fortresses, to make them reasonably safe, requires an enormous amount of money to be spent upon it. And what says the Secretary of State about his two Army Corps? The Secretary of State says—

> "For the 1st Army Corps, the Cavalry division, and the troops for the line of communication, the whole of the necessary outfit, including clothing, arms, accoutrements, equipments, tents, stores, supplies, and vehicles, might have been said to be practically complete"—

not are complete—

> "except that every month produces new demands and alterations, and some of the transport *matériel* is not of the newest pattern."

Does the Secretary of State really mean to bring forward that miserable excuse that constant changes in accoutrements and equipment have prevented him from completing the equipment of the 1st Army Corps? Those things do not change, at all events in such short periods of time, but that your 1st Army Corps at least ought to be completely equipped. The next paragraph is still more important—

> "For the remaining troops it is partly in existence, and could probably be completed without serious delay."

Partly! Probably! And yet the Secretary of State is anxious to conceal our weakness! If the House of Commons thinks that a satisfactory statement to make to the House of Commons in respect of the results of our military system, and if after that it can lightly vote supplies to a system which produces such small and inadequate results, the House of Commons takes a very remarkable view of the situation. I cannot pass from this paragraph without alluding to the Cavalry division of the 1st Army Corps. Will the House believe it that, after providing for the wants of the 1st Army Corps, there would not be left in the country for military purposes, 2,000 Cavalry horses? Will the Secretary of State stand up and say that the Commander-in-Chief and the military heads are responsible for this state of things? That is what I want to know. I wish to apologize to the House for detaining it at this length; but the matter is so important that I venture to make even further demands upon the patience of hon. Members. I wish to allude to the question of the rifle of the British Army. Now, it is a most remarkable thing that there are three distinct operations going on in the Government factories with regard to the rifle of the Army. In the first place there is a new rifle which is going to be manufactured in certain quantities this year and in larger quantities next year. There is then going on the conversion of the Enfield-Martini rifle, and a most melancholy story that unfolds. Two years ago we spent nearly £300,000 on manufacturing what was considered to be an excellent rifle for the Army, the Enfield-Martini. Although a magazine rifle was then before the War Office, the War Office decided that they would not manufacture a magazine rifle but the Enfield-Martini, and they spent the sum I have mentioned in doing so. Now the War Office have decided that they will have a magazine rifle, and thus the money spent on the Enfield-Martini has been absolutely thrown away. And what are they going to do now? They are converting the Enfield-Martini, which had a smaller bore, into the Martini-Henry, which had a larger bore. That is the second operation, and the third operation is that they are continuing to manufacture the Martini-Henry, although it is likely to be superseded very soon by the magazine rifle. The result of all this is, that supposing, for the sake of illustration, this country was invaded in 1890, there would certainly be two rifles, and probably three rifles, in the hands of the British troops defending this country, with certainly two, and probably three, different sorts of ammunition. What nonsense, then, to talk of concealing our weakness from foreign nations. I think the House will agree that this is a sickening and heart-breaking story. Now, is it not the case that the time has come for rigid and vigorous inquiry and for radical reform? A Royal Commission is asked for, and the Government do not see their way to assenting to the Motion, at any rate in the form in which it stands on the Paper. From the statement of the First Lord of the Treasury on Monday night they do not appear to have made up their minds on the subject.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I beg my noble Friend's pardon. I distinctly said the Government were prepared to grant an inquiry into the system of organization and into the administration of the Army.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I can assure my right hon. Friend that though I listened to his speech with great attention, I caught nothing of that kind, and if he will turn to the report in *The Times* I do not think he will find those particular words. But at any rate the matter comes to this, the Government refuse the Motion of my hon. and gallant Friend for a Royal Commission to inquire into the requirements for the protection of the Empire. Now, a Select Committee would be absolutely useless, and a Royal Commission of the ordinary kind would be worse than useless—because it would be composed probably of a great number of men who would meet three or four times a month during the Session and adjourn over the Recess, and it would be highly improbable that such a Royal Commission could possibly give a Report before next year; probably not before three years would they be able to examine the mass of evidence that would fill a volume or two of the Blue Books. In the meantime our splendid system would go on in all its glory. There are two essential points about a Royal Commission which must be recognized. It must be a Commission of high authority, and it must be a Commission which will work with the utmost expedition. I do not think that anybody can suppose that the need for an inquiry has not arrived. If that is conceded, I will tell the House that what we want is a Military Commission, whose function it will be to tell they people what they do not know—what is the real opinion of the military heads upon our existing military state. That has always been kept from the people. We have asked, why should we know—what is the necessity for knowing these things? They are known to the military experts and the Government know them. I know the Government know it, but it has been kept from the public. What these high military authorities ought to do is to discover what they know, tell us what we want, and they ought to discover and inquire into the cost of putting things in order and maintaining things in an efficient state. It might deliberate and report to the Government in less than six weeks Without doubt such a Commission might give to the Government and the country and Parliament the military opinion on these points. Can there be any doubt that we should be infinitely better off than we are now? I will now read the last extract with which I will trouble the House; it is from the evidence of Lord Wolseley, who said—

> "The greatest misfortune that occurs to me upon this subject arises from the fact that our military requirements have never been inquired into—have never been tabulated and laid down. There is no fixed point up to which we work, whether it is the Commander-in-Chief or any official connected with the Army; we have had nothing decided by the country as to what the country wants, or as to what our military policy, its aims and requirements are. Q. 2,642.—Then you do not know what you want? A.—We do not know what we want. We do not know what we are working up to. . . . There has never been any authoritative inquiry instituted as to what are the military requirements of the Empire. He recommended a Royal Commission to examine experts on the various topics connected with the subject."

If this House by its vote puts aside all the opinion of Members of the House; if it puts aside the opinion of the Adjutant General, if it consents to an inquiry which is meant, not to enlighten, but to blind the country, this House does not represent the opinions of the country. There are other matters to which I wish to refer, but I shall not go into them now. I shall confine my remarks to the importance of the subject; but perhaps I have said enough to let the House understand the position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1886. Year by year, as a private Member, I have seen the expenditure growing, and year by year I have seen the result. Year by year I have seen the distress and disquietude, not only in the minds of the Army, but the public, growing deeper and stronger. I hoped that by putting that pressure on the spending departments, by cutting off the supplies —I hoped that I might force them and compel the heads of these departments to look into their own affairs and make the necessary reforms; but they would not. What, therefore, was my position? I knew that in the Session that was then coming, I should be called upon to defend an expenditure which I knew was lavish and wasteful. I knew I should be called upon to sustain and maintain a system and an establishment which was rotten and bad, and I concluded that my miserable capacities were not equal to the task, and that I must leave such a performance to some one more qualified. The attitude the Government have taken up is one of resistance, but what are we called upon to do? To vote confidence in the existing system. I cannot do that, because I know it is hopeless and bad.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I think in the closing sentence of the noble Lord's speech, will be found perhaps the best reason for the Address he has made. The House will probably agree with my noble Friend that he was bound to justify the resignation which took place 12 months ago at perhaps the most critical period that has ever been arrived at in the history of this country. For motives which were, no doubt, entirely satisfactory to himself, my noble Friend thought it necessary to place his resignation in the hands of the Prime Minister at that time, and, therefore, I am not surprised when the Estimates are again before us my noble Friend again feels it necessary to justify in some manner the step he has taken. I have two preliminary observations to make on his speech. When this debate commenced on Monday last I listened with great attention to the speeches made by the Naval and Military Members of the House, all advocating from their different points of view, but in the kindest manner to myself personally, an enormous increase of the public expenditure of the country. And it would really appear, as I listened, that the Secretary of State, instead of being the reckless spendthrift my noble Friend described him to be, was the most economical guardian of the public purse. After that I had hoped we should have heard from my noble Friend, who has always been putting forward his desire of strengthening the Government in the direction of economy, a speech offering some substantial assistance towards effecting economies which he, at all events, desires to see effected. Well, now, there is another point on which I expected to hear my noble Friend say something more. He has got a plan. I do not allude to the suggestion which he made at the time of his resignation last year that the necessary economy should be effected by abandoning or modifying the policy of defending our ports and coaling stations, because I understand that he has now abandoned that plan.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL said, he would still decline, under the present system, to spend money on the coaling stations.

MR. E. STANHOPE: My noble Friend adheres to that suggestion. But he has another plan. He told us that in his speech at Wolverhampton, and it seems hardly patriotic to continue for a year to hide it in his sleeve, especially as that plan was one which, we were told by my noble Friend, would put right the defences of the country substantially in the course of a year or 18 months, and, at the same time, this could be effected with a reduction of about £4,000,000 a-year. I regret that my noble Friend thinks it necessary that he should still keep this explanation back from Parliament and the country. All that my noble Friend advocates now is an inquiry by Royal Commission with the real object of substituting a Military head for the civil control as it at present exists at the War Office. I come now to deal more closely with the speech of the noble Lord. He attacks the Department for its inefficiency and its extravagance. My first observation is that if it be an extravagant system, it is a system of very old standing indeed, and if you make a comparison, as my noble Friend has on many occasions attempted to do, between the expenditure of the most economical times in recent years, say, 1874-5, shortly after Lord Cardwell's reforms, and the present time, you will find that, although there has been a considerable increase of expenditure, the causes of that increase are thoroughly capable of being explained to the country and the House. I have taken 1874-5, because it is, *par excellence*, the economical year. The reforms of Lord Cardwell, who had endeavoured to cut down the cost of military administration, were beginning to have their full effect, and the result was a considerable reduction over the expenditure of a few years before. Comparing the Army Estimates of 1874-5 and the present time, I find that the increase has been £3,500,000. Let me analyze that for a moment. In the first place, 20,000 men have been added to the Army. The cost of adding these 20,000 men, together with the additional expenditure caused by the institution of deferred pay, which means additional pay to the soldier, accounts for about £1,000,000. The extra cost of the Auxiliary Forces, which have so greatly added to the strength of the country, is about £750,000. The Non-Effective Services largely caused by the abolition of purchase and the cost of increased pensions under several Administrations, account for £1,000,000. There is also a sum of about £300,000 in the present Estimate for ammunition and other armaments required for the Military ports, and thus there remains only £400,000, which is required for our field artillery, small arms, and other defences which have been necessitated by the great advances in scientific knowledge. But I want to go a little further into my noble Friend's arguments. He has dwelt in particular upon the enormously greater cost of the English as compared with the German Army, and the small result we get in England as compared with Germany. I think I shall be able to show the House one or two reasons why any such comparison is practically valueless. Germany has practically emancipated herself from what was described by a distinguished military critic as the toils and trammels of annual Estimates. All Germany's armaments and equipments have not been paid for out of annual Estimates, but from large sums which Germany has received from other sources. I have taken the trouble to work out the course of England and Germany during the last 16 years. So far as I can make out Germany has spent the whole of the French indemnity and a further sum, in all I believe £212,000,000, upon her fortresses and the arming and equipment of her troops.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: Where do you get those figures from?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: I get them from the best possible source I can, but my noble Friend must be aware it is impossible to get them with complete accuracy. They are not official figures, but they are at least as accurate as those of my noble Friend.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: My figures were given to the Committee by General Brackenbury, who had taken them from the German Army Estimates. Where did yours come from?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: From General Brackenbury. My figures are these—the German Government spent during that period £91,000,000 on forts and fortresses; £75,000,000 were spent upon arms and armaments of various descriptions, and now they are asking for a further grant of £14,000,000 to add to the armament of the troops. You thus find that outside the annual Estimates Germany has during the last 16 years spent £14,000,000 a-year. What has England done during the same time? There have been various Votes of Credit in that period, amounting to £28,000,000, or £1,750,000 a-year. My noble Friend will not contend for a moment that money so voted all goes to the equipment of the Army. A large portion is spent on foreign expeditions to Egypt, South Africa, or other parts of the world, and only a small portion is used for arms or equipments. These Votes of Credit, as I say, amount to £28,000,000. Germany has spent £212,000,000, and France has doubled her National Debt. And now as regards the annual expenditure, General Brackenbury has pointed out that in order to make a fair comparison, you must add to the German Estimate the amount which would be required if the German Army were on the same system as our own, and the rations, clothing, and other items cost what they cost in England. You must add, in fact, £9,000,000 to the cost of the German Army, and you will arrive at this result. Germany spends £28,000,000 a-year, for which she gets a regular army of 470,000 men, besides the enormous Reserves which she can call up by mobilization. England, deducting the cost of the Auxiliary Forces and the cost of troops in the Colonies, gets for £8,000,000 at the outside 115,000 men in this country, besides she has also got in addition those very expensive depôts which have to be kept up to feed the Army in India and the Colonies. In support of what I say I will only quote one single answer given by General Brackenbury. In that sentence General Brackenbury expresses his opinion that, taking into account the difference between a Conscript and a Volunteer Army, the cost of living for our Army and the greater amount of salaries, diffierences amounting in some items to 50 or 100 per cent. if we could put two Army Corps into the field, we get fairly good value for our money. I give one further illustration, if the House will allow me, of the argument which I am now using. When my noble Friend speaks of the military strength of Germany, and of her being able to put 19 Army Corps into the field as against our two, why does he not include our Reserves?

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I do.

Mr. E. STANHOPE: We have an enormous reserve power in this country. We have the Militia and Volunteers, of which my noble Friend is not disposed to take any account. The result of our expenditure is, shortly, this—that, in addition to the Army which we can put into the field in this country, or for the purpose of a foreign expedition, we have one whole Army Corps throughout the Colonies; we have available for garrisons and allotted to garrisons, composed of Militia and Volunteers, 124,000 men, or at least three Army Corps; and, lastly, we have an available force in this country of 152,000 men more, or four Army Corps, which could be utilized for the defence of the country in time of invasion. I have given this summary in order to show that it is not fair in making comparisons between England and Germany to take into account all that Germany can get together by conscription, and not to make allowance for what we in England can get by that public spirit which exists so largely in our population, and which supplies us with Volunteers who will be of the greatest possible value in time of need. Now I come to the charge of extravagance. My noble Friend alleges that in the reorganization which it has been my duty to introduce into the War Office, the only result has been to abolish some offices and substitute others. If that were true, I should still claim some credit for it. I do not believe that there has ever been a great reorganization at the War Office which has been effected at so little cost. My noble Friend says we have abolished a Director of Supply and Transport, and made Sir Arthur Haliburton an Assistant Secretary for War. Everybody who is acquainted with the War Office will acknowledge his great services to the War Office. Instead of allowing him to retire, as he was entitled to do, we asked him to undertake the difficult duty of assisting in the transfer of the Commissariat and Transport Departments from the civil to the military side. He can render most efficient assistance to the Quartermaster General, and I therefore entreated him to remain at least one year to give us the benefit of his experience in carrying these reforms into operation. My noble Friend also calls attention to the fact that we are adding to the financial department, and that although we have abolished the Assistant Director of Transport, have added an Assistant Accountant General. It must be remembered that the control of the financial department had now been extended for the first time to the expenditure of £8,000,000 of the public money, hitherto without such control, and that this has been done practically without any increase of cost. As to the other criticisms which my noble Friend made respecting Army reform, he will admit that in the Committee over which he presided last year we had a good deal of evidence affecting the department of the Director of Artillery and Stores. I would remind the noble Lord that General Alderson told that Committee what he had told the Committee on the Manufacturing Department, that it was utterly, entirely impossible for any Director of Artillery, however industrious and able, to carry out the whole work devolving on him. He explained to my noble Friend that it was utterly impossible for the Director of Artillery, sitting in London, to exercise adequate or complete control over the manufacturing departments. And accordingly, in the reforms which I have made, I have adopted the proposals made by Lord Morley's Committee, and have cut in two, as it were, the office of Director of Artillery, and have put over the manufacturing departments one single head, and limited the Director of Artillery, under military control, to ordering all weapons for the use of the Army, and to inspecting them before they are passed into service. I do not conceive there is any man in the House who will rise up and say that it is not desirable there should be a competent man at the head of these manufacturing departments. To fill that office I have appointed General Maitland — one of the most popular men in the Army, and a man who will command the universal confidence, not only of his own profession, but of all who understand gunmaking. Lord Morley's Committee had proposed that the departments under General Maitland should be administered not by a military man, but by a civilian; but I have not acceded to the proposal, for this reason—that I think the best man ought to be appointed, whether he is a military man or not. The spirit in which that proposal has been carried out will best be seen when I tell the House that while at the head of the manufacturing departments I have appointed General Maitland. I have put a Royal Engineer at the head of the carriage department, and for the head of the Enfield Rifle Factory I have appointed the best gun maker I could find. With respect to the gun factory, after every inquiry which it was possible to make, I have come to the conclusion that it was not an artillery but a Naval officer who would be best man at the head of it, and I have accordingly appointed Captain Younghusband. Whatever prejudices may have existed on previous occasions, I trust the House will think that, acting with the advice of General Maitland, himself an artillery officer, I have chosen the best men for the various positions. I pass to another point. We have taken away the control of the stores from the manufacturing departments. They cannot now inspect the stores. That inspection has been a very great difficulty. We have now handed over to the Military authorities complete control in the matter. I hope and believe that the system which has now been introduced will lead not only to greatly increased efficiency in the inspection, but will prevent the recurrence of such great scandals as have happened in recent years, and that the issue of defective weapons will be put an end to. We have thought it right that all manufacturing departments should be entirely placed under Civil control. Manufacture is one thing, but ordering and inspecting is another, and that has in all cases been placed under Military control. Though the clothing department is undoubtedly a Civil department, there, again the Military authorities order the supplies of clothing. A representative of the Quartermaster General seals the patterns and the clothing is inspected by a Board of officers. To make the inspection as effective as possible various reports on the clothing are made out. It is very easy to say, as is sometimes done, that the clothing supply is bad. [Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Lord Wolseley said so.] I will give the House an instance which occurred only recently. Some woollen clothing was supplied to particular regiments, and the officers complained of it. At the same time they sent up a sample, which they said was much cheaper. It appeared to be a much better article to all appearance; but when ordinary tests were applied it was found that while the clothing supplied to the Army was made of pure wool, the article sent as a sample as being so much superior was almost if not entirely cotton. Now I come to the question of contracts. No doubt the Director of Contracts remains under civilian control. I think it is highly important that the Director of Contracts should be in the closest possible communication with whatever official is responsible for the financial administration of the Army to Parliament, and the Amendment I have introduced will have the advantage that, instead of the Director being under the control of the Surveyor of Ordnance, he will in future be placed entirely under the Financial Secretary, who will be responsible to the House. The post of Director of Contracts is a most difficult and responsible one; but in order to keep touch with the various Departments, the Head of each will be asked to give an opinion with regard to tenders, before those tenders are accepted by the Director of Contracts. My noble Friend asks as to the financial responsibility of the Military Authorities. I wish that financial responsibility to be as complete as it can be, subject to the legitimate control which must be exercised by the heads of the Department in Parliament. My noble Friend has given two or three very amusing cases as instances of the result of the system on which the business affairs of the Army are now managed. He said that there was an enormous correspondence with reference to a deficiency of 2*d*. I happen to know about that case. It was started by a Military officer, and after passing through I do not know how many hands, it was observed by a civilian—the Assistant Director of Clothing—that, instead of its having been allowed to give rise to a voluminous correspondence, the difficulty might have been easily settled by means of a needle and thread. I agree with the noble Lord as to the necessity of more decentralization, and I shall be quite prepared to consider any proposal with that object which may be put forward by the Military Authorities. As to the trumpery details which the Military Authorities have been called upon to deal with, it will be their fault if they do not devise some system under which those trumpery details can be got rid of. The Civil Authorities have been guided by the Military on the question of moving regiments from one place to another. Although a good deal of criticism might be passed upon these constant transfers, in justice to the Military Authorities it ought to be said that they desire to render the Service as popular as possible by not keeping any particular regiment too long at a station which was not considered agreeable. Turning to another point, I must refer to the suggestion of the noble Lord that greater financial powers should be conferred upon the Military Authorities so as almost to put an end to the necessity for the continuance of the office of Secretary for War. [Lord Randolph Churchill dissented.] As the noble Lord does not admit that that is his meaning, I will not trouble the House further upon the point. I will now pass on to the proposal that a Royal Commission should issue to inquire into the state of the War Office. The War Office has been a good deal inquired into of late years, inasmuch as there is scarcely a branch of it that has not formed the subject of a special and exhaustive inquiry. But if it is the pleasure of the House that a Royal Commission should be appointed to further inquire into the working of the Department, or any division of it, I may say, on the part of the Government, that we shall offer no opposition to such further inquiry. The labours of such a Commission as has been suggested by my hon. and gallant Friend (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) would, however, be a very different thing, for it must necessarily occupy an enormous extent of time. It would embrace the requirements of this country, the Colonies, and India, the defence of our ports and coaling stations, the reserve of stores, and their maintenance in storehouses throughout the world, long and short service, and numberless other questions which, I venture to say, would occupy not months but years. Moreover, in approaching the consideration of a Royal Commission, the House would like to know whether it was intended to promote economy or promote extravagance. My noble Friend (Lord Charles Beresford) wanted a Royal Commission because the French had got a number of melenite shells.

Lord CHARLES BERESFORD (Marylebone, E.) explained that he had merely adverted to it as a subject worthy of inquiry.

Mr. E. STANHOPE: Yes, my noble Friend regards it as a question which a Royal Commission could inquire into. I may further point out that, if a Royal Commission of the character suggested were to be appointed, much danger to the public interest might occur through the publication to the world of the weak points of our military service, our stores, our home forts, and our coaling stations abroad. In the Report upon the Military Ports now before the House, we have given only a general account of our deficiencies. Every word of it was considered by me with my Military advisers, who assured me that to give more detail would be dangerous to the interests of the country. If such matters were to be made public, there would be an end, not only of the responsibility of a Government in reference to military matters, but of their freedom of action in regard to them, while with the report of such a Commission before it, if the report is to be considered binding, any Government which is responsible for the safety of the country would find it far more than ordinarily difficult to grant such an increase of the military resources of the country as they might think necessary on an emergency; and, on the other hand, any Government that desired, as I hope we all desire, to carry out legitimate economies, would also find it increasingly difficult to cut down useless expenditure. In these circumstances, Her Majesty's Government cannot consent to the appointment of the Royal Commission which has been asked for, and they adhere to the proposal which was put forward by the First Lord of the Treasury on Monday night. He repeated to the House the terms on which he thought a Commission of Inquiry might be granted. To those terms we are perfectly willing to adhere. They cover an inquiry into the whole naval and military system as at present organized. That, surely, is large enough for any Commission to undertake for all practical purposes. Notwithstanding the inordinate amount of time during which I have trespassed upon the attention of the House, I cannot sit down without touching briefly upon another matter of great importance. I cannot but feel that the speeches such as have been delivered by my noble Friend and by some of my Naval and Military Friends, as reported to the public, are calculated to diminish the influence of this country in the eyes of foreign nations, and in so far as these speeches do not accurately represent the true state of our defences, they diminish that influence to an extent that is unfair and unreasonable. Therefore, I propose shortly to dwell upon the condition of the defences of the country in greater detail than I have dwelt upon the subject in my Statement. In my Statement, as hon. Members will see who have read it, I desired to leave the impression that the defences of our ports and of our coaling stations were far from satisfactory at the present moment. We have at those places obsolete guns, and the defences are not suited to the requirements of modern service, and there are great steps which it is absolutely necessary to take, if we mean to keep abreast of modern requirements, even to the most reasonable extent. The proposals of the Government now before the House consist of an honest attempt to grapple with all the main difficulties, and, indeed, all the criticisms which have been passed upon those proposals accept them as a moderate and reasonable attempt to deal with the great difficulties in which the country is placed at the present time. First, as to the coaling stations, I said last year, with a bluntness that gave offence in some quarters, that the Colonies had reason to complain of the delay which this country had shown in fulfilling in spirit the promises we had made; and for not having, as soon as possible, put those defences in a thoroughly efficient condition. The Government now propose to complete entirely the defence of the coaling stations. That statement has been received in some quarters with cynical laughter, and although it is true that the statement has been made in previous years, yet never in any previous year have the Government asked Parliament to grant once and for all the money required for that purpose. With the exception of certain orders which await the result of this debate and the approval of Parliament, almost all the guns that are necessary for the defence of the coaling stations are not only ordered, but will be ready in the course of the year.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): By the end of this month—this financial year?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: No; certainly not. The hon. Member misunderstands me. I am speaking of the next financial year; and I trust and believe it will be pushed on by the Government, and that with the assistance of the Colonial Governments, who hitherto, I am bound to say, have shown every desire to go beyond us in this matter and to push on the works for which they are responsible, these coaling stations, which are of great importance to the Mother Country and her Colonies, and of general advantage to the Empire, may be completed, if not within the next financial year, at any rate very shortly after. Now, Sir, I come to the military ports. The proposals of the Government contemplate an immediate completion of all the urgent works connected with our military ports. When I was face to face last year with the enormous expenditure asked for by the military authorities, I felt the great difficulty of knowing what really ought to be done at once and what could be postponed until a more convenient period. I took a step which is, I think, a reasonable one. I asked a Committee to assemble with me and to recommend to me and to the House what were the most urgent works of defence of our military ports. All those urgent works are now taken in hand. Although we do not forget such important ports as that mentioned by my hon. and gallant Friend—the defences of Gibraltar urgently requiring some addition—we mean, in the first place, to direct our attention to the important great military ports of this country; and I hope this financial year will not pass without our being able to say, both in respect of Portsmouth and the Thames, that all substantial and main difficulties have been removed. I come now to the mercantile ports. I felt that if we were undertaking the defences of our military ports and coaling stations, the great mercantile ports of this country are also bound to be remembered. We knew that there was a desire in all those ports of the country to raise, for the service of the country, submarine mining corps which were so urgently required for the protection of those ports. We have included a provision in the Estimates for the raising of those corps, and we have included proposals which we are now making to Parliament for money towards the carrying out of submarine mining. We have also added whatever sums may be required for light armaments to protect the submarine mines. But it may be said that is not all they want. Of course not. We know it, but we have put it in that way because we want to induce the localities to come forward and co-operate with us in their own defence. If they desire to see increased defences given to them, they should come and meet us and tell us what they will do in the way of contribution towards their own defence. I can say for the Government that if they will do that we shall be prepared to meet them, and I am anxious, at any rate as regards the principal mercantile ports, that no time shall be lost in providing for them such defences as are adequate to the needs of the case. It may be said, "Why do you not do more than this? Why do you not ask for all the money required to put the ports of the country in a sufficient state of defence, and be done with it?" I will tell the House why. Simply because it is impossible to do more than we are doing at the present time. The rules I have endeavoured to lay down are these—the defence of those ports ought to be carried out as quickly as you can do it, and I have asked those who are most responsible for advising me in carrying out these defences, how quickly they can do it. I am acting on their advice when I fix the term I have decided upon. But I would say at once to the House—and it is abundantly clear in our proposals—that we are not going to be limited by a notion of the three-year rule, if we can do it more quickly. That was the reason why we have asked to put a certain amount of money out of the control of Parliament. My second rule is this—we ought to get value for our money. I urge the House not to open the flood-gates of extravagant expenditure. Lay down a definite programme, as we are endeavouring to do, and then let those who are intrusted with the expenditure of that money—I mean the War Office, both the military and the civil side—show their power to carry out that programme with efficiency and economy; and let them come to Parliament as that programme is being completed, and, if they think fit, ask Parliament to grant them further resources to carry out further work. As regards the garrisons of the military ports and the mercantile ports, we have arranged all the garrison required. Engineers were required, most of which have been provided. Submarine miners were required, and we believe no difficulty will be found in raising among the Volunteers efficient members for the mining corps at these ports. As to the general condition of the Army, I say, and say gladly, with a full sense of responsibility which attaches to the thankless office which I at present hold, that the Army, according to the reports of military authorities, is in a satisfactory state, and steady improvement is taking place. When we are asked for a Royal Commission for the purpose of advising us with regard to some questions relating to the Army I would ask whether it is possible for the Government to find among those persons who would constitute the *personnel* of the Royal Commission any better military advisers than those who are at present at the War Office subject to the Commander-in-Chief? We have Lord Wolseley and Sir Redvers Buller, both men who command in a remarkable degree the confidence of the country. The new organization set on foot by them has only been in force for one year. Great progress has been made during that period, and I am satisfied, unless we are perpetually digging up the roots in order to see how the plant is growing, that the organization lately set on foot is destined to accomplish what this country so urgently requires—namely, the organization of the limited force in this country in a manner which will be sufficient for all practical purposes. I admit that the equipments of those two Army Corps are not fully completed; but I am quite sure hon. Gentlemen who criticize do not fully realize the great producing power of the country. I believe it is the practical experience of the War Office that, although we have gone on year after year adding to the equipments and to the armaments and transports required for those Army Corps, nevertheless there has been no expedition of any magnitude since the Crimean War that we have not been obliged to go to the trade and obtain special articles and equipments for the wants of the troops in that war. The statements which have been made in the House by my noble Friend (Lord Charles Beresford) require some answer. My noble Friend says that he believes we have got very little gunpowder, and that obtained abroad would be stopped if war broke out. I assure my noble Friend that we are fully alive to the fact that all the gunpowder made abroad would be stopped from coming into this country if war broke out. I am also able to inform him that we are able to get an adequate supply of gunpowder in this country. And further, we have at the present time a very large supply of gunpowder of all descriptions; and I am informed, on unquestionable authority, that we are better off than ever before in that respect.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: That is not saying much.

Mr. E. STANHOPE: I am perfectly aware of one very difficult question affecting gunpowder, and that is that the annual expenditure of some new forms of powder has not at present been ascertained. But even of these descriptions of powder, only recently discovered, we have a very fair supply. Another complaint has been mentioned. We have been told that we have a very limited number of good field guns, and that all the remaining field guns in the Army are worth nothing at all. With perfect frankness, I tell the House that we shall have with the proposals now made to the House 33 field and horse batteries equipped with 12-pounder guns. The 12-pounder gun is known, I believe, to be the best field gun in Europe at the present time. With all the remaining batteries we have got 14 equipped with 13-pounder guns, and we have a large number of 16-pounder guns for other batteries. I am told by those who advise me in this matter that the 13-pounder gun is at the present time as powerful a gun as any army abroad possesses. If the armament of our field batteries with new guns is resolutely pushed forward, before long we shall be able to say that all our batteries are better armed than the field batteries of any other country in Europe. With regard to the question of rifles, I really think the noble Lord was a little hard in the terms which he used. The military authorities, after a great deal of experiment, have chosen a magazine rifle for the purpose of a final trial. This matter has exercised very much the minds of the military authorities during some years past in this and in other countries. A committee, mainly composed of military men, but having the advantage of the presence upon it of one or two others who were either specially connected with the Volunteer Force or who knew about shooting, in the first instance selected a rifle of ·4 bore, and in consequence, those responsible for the administration of the Army ordered these rifles. The military authorities, as well as those of other countries, have since discovered that the bore is larger than is desired for the rifle of the future, and so, instead of pressing on the manufacture of a rifle, which might after all have proved not thoroughly good or efficient, they decided to admit their mistake, and say that they would have a smaller bore. I was put into this very uncomfortable position. We had an enormous number of rifles—over 90,000—of ·4 bore. What was to be done with them? Was I to say that they were not of any further use, and to put the country to an enormous loss if they were not made available for service? The course which was taken was, I contend, the only practical one to be adopted; we converted these rifles at a small cost into Martini-Henry rifles, and added them to the store of those rifles with which the troops are still equipped. If I were not to continue to manufacture Martini-Henry rifles, but only to manufacture the new rifle, I should not be able to keep up the adequate reserve of Martini-Henry which is requisite. That is not how I am inclined to regard my responsibility. I have been taunted with saying that we were only going to give these new rifles to the Army, and not to the Volunteers. But everybody knows that you cannot give them all at once to all branches of the Service, and in the meantime the Volunteer Force will naturally continue to be armed with the Martini-Henry. I hope I have given a frank and candid explanation of those points to which reference has been made; if there are any others which may require to be answered, by the leave of the House I may be allowed to answer them afterwards. I do not for a moment deny any responsibility; I am personally conscious that much remains to be done, and I feel deeply the responsibility that rests upon me. I know perfectly well that this is not merely a question of money, although enormous sums are required; it means the utilization of our existing forces, and the application to all the forces of the country of that system of organization which we are endeavouring painfully and carefully to build up. I know that good and honest work is now being done in this matter in this country, and efficiency is being gradually obtained without undue extravagance. The only danger we have to apprehend is the fluctuation of public opinion, and in that respect there is no more certain way of producing that fluctuation than to hold out an exaggerated account of the money required in order to put us in an efficient condition. If we are allowed to go on for a few years in the direction in which we are at present tending, I am certain that, although we have much lee-way to make up, we should gradually achieve our purpose, and that all the defensive forces of the country, whether Regular, or Militia, or Volunteers, can be and will be so organized as to enable the country to feel as safe as any country could feel against any dangers which may threaten it.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): I have listened with great interest to the statement that has just been made by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope). I consider that the present debate is by far the most important debate upon Army and Navy administration that has taken place during the last 20 years. What is the position of affairs? The Government have been in Office now for two and three-quarter years with the exception of a few months. They have appointed Commissions and Committees without end on this subject of Army organization and the work of the Departments of the Army and Navy. They have introduced very great changes in the organization of the Departments, and have proposed very heavy expenditure. No opposition has come to any part of their proposals from these Benches; on the contrary, we have done our best, while fulfilling our duty of criticizing, to give our general support to Her Majesty's Government. And let me remind the House that the debate has been aimed at the object of increasing the expenditure incurred by this country. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Well, wait a little, and I will prove it. I have taken some pains to compare the expenditure in the two Estimates for the Army and Navy now before Parliament with those of 1881—the last year in which there were practically no Supplementary Estimates and no Vote of Credit. In 1881 there was no special expenditure, except a small expenditure with regard to the Transvaal. What was the expenditure of that year? According to the Statistical Abstract, which enables us to compare like with like, it was £25,190,000, and this year it is £30,870,000—that is to say, that there is an increase of about £5,700,000; 'and, in addition to that, there is the one-third of the £2,000,000 which is to be spread over three years. Is that a time to ask for a Royal Commission with the object of increasing that expenditure? Again, we know nothing from its proposers as to its length and scope. Is the proposed Commission to sit for a few weeks only, or to sit until the naval and military expenditure of the country is brought into a satisfactory state? If the Commission is temporary, how will it get through the enormous duties assigned to it? If the Commission is to be a permanent one, it becomes really a body of irresponsible Ministers. What, then, are to be the objects and functions of this Commission, because we have had a great deal of vague statement? The hon. and gallant Member for North-West Sussex (Sir Walter B. Barttelot), in arguing for the appointment of this Commission, said that he wanted to know what was to be our policy with regard to Bulgaria, and as to preventing the Russians getting that country; and he said something more about Russia getting Constantinople as the reason why we should appoint this Commission. He said that he wanted the new rifle to be at once issued to the whole Army, as well as to the Militia and Volunteers. The hon. and gallant Member for Birkenhead (Sir Edward Hamley), whose speeches—marked by great ability—I always listen to with great interest, quoted at some length the words of Admiral Aube, of the French Navy, in which he described the duty of the French Navy in future to be to attack defenceless towns like Brighton. He ought also to have added that other and far more able French naval officers have repudiated entirely that proposal. Besides, French officers are as opposed to their Admiralty as some of ours. I read the other day an article by a French officer of great ability severely animadverting upon the present condition of the French Navy, and I was startled at the similarity of language to that with which we are not unaccustomed here, and I could pair off quite as many adverse comments by French officers upon the French Navy as are made by the English naval officers upon the English Navy. Other Members have urged the appointment of this Committee for the purpose of increasing expenditure. It is, according to one, to supersede all the existing fortifications of our Military Ports; according to another, to insist on the fortification of our coal shipping ports, to supersede the present military organization and increase the depôts, to set on foot a large increase in the construction of magazine guns; in fact, there is hardly any form of addition to expenditure which has not been given as a reason for forming this Commission. But whatever it is to do, what is the body itself to be and what its functions? It is simply to supersede the Cabinet by a Commission of irresponsible experts. I have had a little experience lately of the work undertaken by a Commission, which wandered, as all Commissions tend to wander, from the original object for which it was appointed. There was a very interesting Commission and Report referred to during the debate — the Commission presided over by Sir James Fitzjames Stephen. It was appointed to inquire into the system under which patterns of warlike stores were adopted and the stores passed into the Service during the last five years. Now, for that purpose it was an excellent Commission, presided over by a learned Judge who, alike as a Judge, a literary man, and a journalist, we all very much admire; but they, unfortunately, went far beyond what was referred to them. That Commission travelled into the most important Constitutional questions regarding the functions of the Secretary of State and the Cabinet and the officers of the Department, which were not for a moment the subject which they were appointed to consider. In examining what ought to be the Constitutional functions of the Secretary of State they made absolutely erroneous statements, without ever thinking it necessary to examine any Secretary of State except one who had held the Office for a few months. I was myself the subject of one of those absolutely incorrect statements, and I wrote about them to the Chairman to take the necessary steps to have the matter put right. It has not been done, and the subject has now passed by; but it shows the danger of referring Parliamentary and Constitutional questions to a Royal Commission presided over by great Judges. What was the main recommendation of this Royal Commission? It was to substitute for the Secretary of State, in respect of half his functions, a great General, holding office on the tenure of a Judge—that is to say, only removable by the vote of both Houses. We have heard about the extravagance and want of system in the framing of the Army and Navy Estimates in recent years. What would the House think of Estimates brought before Parliament by a great General, for which Estimates nobody in Parliament was to be responsible, and according to a system under which the whole ground of Parliamentary control of the Army and Navy expenditure would be entirely lost? If Royal Commissions, with a Judge as their Chairman, tend to run riot in the particulars to which I have alluded, what is likely to be the outcome of one under military influence, to whom all military matters are to be referred? I ask how it would be possible for a Royal Commission, whoever they may be, to determine what would be required as to the Army with respect to events in Bulgaria or Constantinople, or difficulties with any Foreign Powers, unless they saw the despatches on which the policy of the Government was founded? Then we are told that this Commission is to be independent of Parliament and made popular. All I can say is that these words are not very consistent with some of the ideas of a democratic House of Commons, and I doubt whether any democratic House of Commons would resign the control of £30,000,000 or £40,000,000 of expenditure to the revision of experts according to the present idea of a Royal Commission. I do not counsel that we should do nothing. I had the honour of being Secretary of State shortly after all these questions of Army organization had been settled. The settlement commenced with Lord Cardwell's proposal, and proceeded afterwards for some years, and was completed under other Secretaries of State, including Lord Cranbrook. I made no change in a system I found so recently reformed, and I therefore feel perfectly impartial at the present moment with respect to any proposals which may be made to improve the administration of the War Office; and I admit that there are several points on which we shall require further information. There is one point on which I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) will throw a little light. According to his Memorandum—as I read it—he does contemplate the expenditure of something like £6,000,000 upon the defences of the country and coaling stations abroad, but he only proposes to raise £3,000,000. What does he propose to do as to the other £3,000,000? We must remember that this is not the first time we have had loans raised for a limited number of years for certain operations. There was the loan asked for by Lord Palmerston in 1861, and Lord Cardwell's loans more recently. In those cases Parliament made arrangements for the entire cost of the work. How does the right hon. Gentleman propose to raise the whole sum? I must also say a word as to the new organizations. I say nothing about naval administration; but as to Army administration, I think that the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington has hit one great blot. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War has made a very great change in the administration of the Army; he proposes that the officer at the head of the Military branch should have cast on him the duty of preparing the Estimates of his Department. But under Mr. Cardwell's Order of 1870 the head of a spending branch—say that of the Surveyor General—had not only the charge of preparing the Estimates, but also the responsibility cast on him of seeing that the cost and expenditure were duly and carefully examined. That, I think, is a sound principle. But these later words are omitted. It is true the military officers are charged with preparing the Estimates, but there is no responsibility for the expenditure. There is nothing more agreeable than to prepare Estimates; but without responsibility for the expenditure under those Estimates the charge of preparing them is a mere sham. I agree with the remarks of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington in regard to this matter. I have referred to one or two points in a practical spirit, and I hope that the remarks I have made may have some influence with the Secretary of State and the First Lord of the Treasury.

GENERAL FRASER (Lambeth, N.) said, he distinctly repudiated the idea that the Motion that had been brought forward was an indictment of the Government. On the contrary, those who supported it wished to strengthen the hands of the Government in every possible way. They had made no claim for control over expenditure, and they had not attacked any Member of the Government. It was the system which caused the extravagance that had been attacked, and in which they had no confidence. The great evil was that no matter what happened, there was no responsibility attaching to any particular Minister. No soldier wished for extravagance; but they wished that the country should get value for its money. They gave the Government full credit for any saving that had been effected during the past year, and they also recognized the advances that had been made towards organization. They were strongly of opinion that the country should know the true state of affairs with regard to the position in which it stood. Members of the House of Commons who had spent their lives in the Service knew only enough to make them anxious to know more. They had very little information from the War Department to guide them, except the Army Estimates and the Memorandum issued with them. But this Memorandum threw no light on many questions of vital interest to the nation. For instance, no mention was made of the Horse Artillery branch of the Service, although the question had a very prominent place in last year's debates, in which numbers of Members expressed their strong sense of the inadvisability of the reduction of four batteries of Royal Horse Artillery. On last year's Estimates the Secretary for War announced—

> "Our object is to have no longer a large proportion of attenuated batteries, but to make those we have efficient and valuable for service. Instead of many skeleton batteries, we hope to have a few organized in the most effective manner, ready to be produced whenever they are wanted."—(3 *Hansard* [312] 300.)

On this year's Estimates the Secretary for War announced that the Aldershot Division had been raised with the object of organizing a small force to despatch, complete in every detail, on the shortest notice without calling out a man of the Reserves. This surely implied that the promised increase to the attenuated batteries—retained in the Service after last year's reduction of four Horse Artillery batteries—had taken place. Yet on reference to page 10 of this year's Army Estimates it was found that no battery had been raised to war strength, and that the Horse Artillery batteries remained now as attenuated as before. It was evident that to raise the four batteries of the 1st Army Corps to war strength it would be absolutely necessary to break up entirely the remaining batteries; and for all this there would not be sufficient horses. It was evident that any call for an extra battery of horse to India or elsewhere would cause further confusion; and that in case of one Army Corps being despatched the United Kingdom would be left without horse artillery. They were told that

> "The whole of the units necessary to complete the organization of two Army Corps, a Cavalry Division, and troops for the communications are now actually in existence."

There was a great deficiency in the Horse Artillery, and it now appeared that the units were but cadres, and there were no means of completing them. As the Memorandum stated that the Reserves were not to be touched, were the other units more fully prepared? In view of the statement in the Memorandum he would ask was it a fact or not that the three regiments of Cavalry at Aldershot were 100 horses and nearly 300 men short of the complement? If this was the position of the troops at Aldershot, were they better prepared elsewhere? He feared not. The strength of the Cavalry regiments set forth in different parts of the Estimates varied. For years they had been assured that all was done on the responsibility of the Secretary of State for War. But what was the worth of responsibility without penalty? Who had suffered of late years for his responsibility? Who had suffered for not relieving Gordon? Who suffered for Majuba Hill? There was no wish to relieve the Government of responsibility; but they did think that it should understand what it was responsible for in the interests and welfare of the nation, and the inquiries of the suggested Commission might effect this.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) said, that although the debate had afforded him an intellectual treat, he had watched its progress with wonder, confusion, and with something like alarm. They knew that society abounded with croakers and alarmists, who told them on all possible occasions that the country had no Army and no Navy, and that if it had a Navy it would be useless. Until now, however, these sentiments had found no widespread or authoritative echo in the House. During the present discussion they had heard hon. Member after hon. Member give forth with dismal wails prophecies as to the terrible consequences which must ensue. Various speakers had said that our coaling stations were absolutely unprepared for any contingency in time of war. They had been told that if the Channel Fleet was away for a week or two, or was incapacitated for service, the country would be a prey to the nearest foreign invader. They were told that the Army, if the country had one at all, was inefficient, and that the Navy was also not in the state it ought to be in. Then, again, they were told by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) that it did not matter how much was spent because the system was all wrong. It was said, too, that they had got no fixed point, and that they were absolutely deceiving the public as to what was going on. There was some comfort to be found in the fact that nearly all these accusations were made by Gentlemen of the military persuasion, who were very naturally inclined to take a gloomy view of the condition of our Army, and who were apt to wish and to press for large and ever increasing expenditure. He did not desire to introduce any Party considerations into the debate; but he could not help thinking that a certain amount of suspicion attached to statements made upon the opposite Benches. The demands made for increased expenditure had, in the main, been made from the Tory side of the House—from what might be called the professional Jingo side of the House. Of course, he did not want in any degree to go counter to those who had, he thought, with some amount of right on their side, pressed the Government to give a Committee or a Commission to inquire into the present state of things. After all the alarmist expressions, the very able and very clear and interesting statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) came with a most refreshing flavour. The right hon. Gentleman told them that, within our narrow limits of expenditure and size of the force, the Army was good and was doing well. That, no doubt, was true in a very great measure; but it was certainly very probable that the country would become somewhat alarmed in consequence of the statements which were now being made in very influential quarters. He was sure the people would like to get a little more information, and therefore he thought it was right and just and reasonable that the Commission asked for should be appointed. He was glad the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War had agreed to give pretty nearly all that had been asked by the hon. and gallant Baronet (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) who opened the debate. Of course, the size of our Army must depend very largely upon what we wanted to do with it—whether we wanted it for offensive or purely defensive purposes. There was still the Russian bogey in front of us; but if at any time the Russian Army dreamt of crossing the Indian frontier, he thought we should find it a far better defence to have a happy, contented, united, and well governed-people there than any amount of force. If he judged from what he had seen in India lately, the people were persuaded that the Army was not the best that could be invented, but it was better than what they had before; it was certainly better for them to have it than to have the Russian Army. There was, too, the old bogey of foreign invasion. For a century or more people had talked about foreign invasions, but they had never come off. There had not been an invasion of England since the time of Julius Cæsar, and he did not suppose we were likely to have another. Surely the day was past when one country invaded other countries for the mere lust of booty or plunder. Some reason must be given for proceedings of that kind; and he thought that probably, by the aid of diplomacy and the observance of a cautious policy, we should avoid dangers of that kind. They heard a great deal about the wishes of the constituencies. One hon. Member opposite told them that the people were desirous to see a large increase of our armaments. He doubted that very much. What he saw in his own part of the country was quite the opposite. He believed that the people would like to see the armaments diminished, if possible, and the great burdens of the country diminished in equal proportion. What the people said was that we must defend ourselves, keep what we had got, not mix ourselves up in the affairs of the Continent; we must take care of our force and power as directed to the preservation of our own coasts, our own property at home, and the defence of our honour and position abroad. Of course, the country must have a strong Navy; but we could never, with our Military Service, attempt to play at the game of brag with Foreign Powers. We must have a small Army at home—perhaps a mere skeleton Army which could be rapidly filled up. He would not venture to make any more remarks upon the general question. He did not think he should have risen at all if it had not been for certain statements in the very valuable Memorandum submitted to them by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War, with respect to the Service with which he was formerly connected—namely, the Army Medical Department. He hoped he would not be out of Order in saying one or two words on the present aspect of that Department. It would be more convenient, no doubt, that remarks on that subject—or on any specific subject—were deferred till the particular Votes relating to the different subjects came on. But they had often heard that the Army Medical Department must be put on a proper footing. He was bound to say that the right hon. Gentleman who so ably presided over Army matters in the House met them in a very cordial way in a Committee upstairs last year. The right hon. Gentleman recommended that they should defer any discussion on Army medical matters until Vote 4 came on, and he promised them a good opportunity of discussing that Vote. Of course, the right hon. Gentleman could not arrange the Business of the House; he could not arrange when any particular topic should come on. He might propose, but the House disposed; and it happened that the discussion took place in the small hours of the morning. Although they had now put their House in order, and they would have no more small hours, still the discussion upon Army medical matters would very likely come on at an inconvenient time—either late in the evening or late in the Session, when many Members who took great interest in the question might be away. Now, one or two alterations in the medical department of the Army had filled the Service with a certain amount of discomfort and alarm. It was said that doctors were grumblers; but he did not think that any people grumbled unless there was some foundation for grumbling. The fact was that the medical department had for years been in a state of perpetual uncertainty and unrest; what had been given to it one day had been taken away the next. The general feeling of discomfort and uncertainty culminated in 1878 in a practical Boycotting of the department; in other words, no candidates came forward, and the condition of the Army Medical Department, as regarded the influx of new men, was really at a standstill. The Government of the day very properly gave a Committee to inquire into the grievances and to suggest remedies. Evidence was taken, including that of the leading surgeons of the Medical Schools of London. It was then distinctly stated that the condition of unrest and the want of stability in the department was the reason of the great paucity of candidates, and the principal recommendation of the Committee was that the medical men in the Army Medical Department should be allowed the privilege of retiring after 20 years' service. The adoption of that recommendation was quite successful. There was a large influx of candidates, and, in spite of certain ups and down, the supply has been continual. Although doctors gained a good deal in being able to retire after 20 years' service, they gave up something to get it. Before that they had had the right, if incapacitated by illness, to retire before 20 years on a pension. They gave that up, and now they had no such right. Not many had retired; but——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The subject of retiring medical pensions has no direct reference to the Amendment now before the House, which relates to the military resources of the Empire.

Dr. FARQUHARSON said, he would not pursue the subject any further, and apologized if he had in any way trespassed on the House at the wrong time. He would only add that he hoped the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War would undertake to give them, on Vote 4, ample opportunity of discussing fully the question he had referred to. Had it been proper for him to do so, he should have referred to the question of increased foreign service, and also to the burning question of the relative rank of the Army Medical Department. Before he resumed his seat he must join his voice to that of others as to the necessity of some kind of Commission, as had been suggested by hon. Gentlemen opposite, and express his satisfaction that the wishes of those who wanted a Committee of Inquiry had been so justly met, as he thought they had been, by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War.

General GOLDSWORTHY (Hammersmith) said, that in supporting the Amendment of the hon. and gallant Baronet the Member for North-West Sussex (Sir Walter B. Barttelot), he wished it to be distinctly understood that he did not, in the slightest degree, intend to reflect either upon the Government generally or upon the right hon. Gentleman the present Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) personally. As an officer of the Army, he had had the privilege of seeing the working of the present military system, which civilians had not. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) had given them his opinion; but then he had had no experience. A man might be at the head of a Department, and yet know nothing of the working of the Army generally; there were many things which never came under the cognizance of the Secretary of State for War; and what the supporters of this Amendment particularly wished to do was to call attention to the fact that the system at present prevailing in the Army was not one of decentralization, but of centralization—a system of red tape, a system of inefficiency. One of the greatest reasons he could conceive for the granting of this Commission was the statement the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War made to the effect that his Military Advisers included Lord Wolseley. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) quoted the evidence of Lord Wolseley, which was to the effect that there was no information as to what the Army required. If an officer in the position of Lord Wolseley was not aware and had no means of ascertaining what the Army required, he (General Goldsworthy) did not know how any other means were to be devised, except the appointment of a Royal Commission, through which to obtain the requisite information. Many officers did know what was wanted, so far as their own particular branch was concerned; but they did not like to say it was wanted. Officers who were independent and expressed their feelings too freely had black marks put against their names. One of the reasons which induced him to make up his mind to become a Member of that House was that he was determined, as far as in him lay, to get the Army put upon a good footing. An immense amount of useless correspondence took place in the Army; if there was the same in any private business, the business could not last a day. He was able to say that there were hundreds and hundreds of letters every year sent up to the Department about things which ought not to need any reference being made to it. They might have a general officer nominally commanding in a district, and yet find that the district was really commanded in London or in Dublin, or in some other place. How could such a system as that work? If a general officer was not fit to be entrusted with responsibility, do not appoint him; and if, when they had appointed him, they found he was a failure, they ought at once to remove him, and never let an inefficient officer remain in a high position a single moment. What he had maintained all along was that they must decentralize. The War Office or the Horse Guards must look to higher things than interfering with general officers, and general officers should have a great deal more power than they now possessed; and colonels commanding regiments should have more power than they had at present. He did not think that any extra money was required. If the money they now had was properly applied they would be enabled to do a great deal more than they at present did. He complimented the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War upon his Memorandum, and upon the evident attention he had given to the subject. His (General Goldsworthy's) desire was—and he believed it was the desire of nearly every Member in the House who had spoken upon this Amendment—to strengthen the right hon. Gentleman's hands. The right hon. Gentleman, in his Memorandum, remarked—

> "The only remaining deficiency consists of four companies of fortress engineers which it is not proposed to raise this year."

Now, those were just the sort of remarks which made military men rather vexed. What they said to this was—"If these companies are necessary, why are they not raised? or if they are not necessary the deficiency does not exist. There are only four companies wanted. Why not raise them?" The right hon. Gentleman admitted there was a deficiency, so that if there was a deficiency the men were wanted. Then, again, in another paragraph of his Memorandum, the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "In all these particulars considerable progress had been made in the past year."

Progress had been made for a long time, but they had not yet arrived at finality. Then the right hon. Gentleman remarked in his Memorandum—

> "These stores have been hitherto, to a great extent, concentrated in large depôts. The arrangements for the decentralization of a large portion of them which is indispensable to avoid delay and confusion are being proceeded with."

That was a very good thing; but all these things had been proceeded with, and what he and his hon. and gallant Friends wanted to see was that all these things should be completed. They did not like the present uncertainty. Very likely next year they would find that these things were still being proceeded with when they should have been completed. It was just the same with the coaling stations; the sooner they were put into a proper state of defence the better it would be for the country. It had been remarked just now that it would be well if there was one head for the Army and the Navy. He did not know that that would be a bad thing if they had one Cabinet Minister with great power responsible to the House and the country for the defences of the country.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) said, he did not propose to detain the House for more than a very few moments; but he desired to express the satisfaction with which he had followed the course of the present debate, because, carrying back his mind some eight or nine Sessions ago, and comparing what he then witnessed with what he witnessed to-day, he was more than satisfied with the great advance which had been made. It would not be any exaggeration to say that eight or nine years ago the command which that House had of the military or naval expenditure, the check which the House had upon the Ministers of those two Services, was merely nominal; but during these years there had been—and he had watched it with great interest and satisfaction—a great advance in the attitude of the House and a much firmer grasp of the conduct of affairs than used to be the case. Now, the Government were challenged from their own side with regard to the administration of the Army. That of itself was a good sign. The arguments which had been advanced by hon. Members and by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) were such that no intelligent and reasonable Member could help feeling it was necessary that he should address himself to the points which were urged upon him. All this was very different from what used to be. He remembered hearing the noble Lord the Member for the Rossendale Division of Lancashire (the Marquess of Hartington) declare that he had never known a discussion on the Army Estimates result in any reduction of the public charge except on one solitary occasion, when he (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) objected to an exaggerated establishment of a minor character. That was perfectly true; but the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington had raised a number of points which would certainly force themselves upon the attention of the House and of the country. Now, the reason he (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) rose was to express, in spite of the satisfaction with which he regarded the general situation, the disappointment with which he read the Statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War. The right hon. Gentleman claimed credit for his administration for having, as it were, put his house in order, and yet his very Statement showed he was conscious that his house was not in order. He said that in past years many millions of pounds sterling had been spent upon the Army, and the result had not been satisfactory, and he proceeded then to indicate the intention of the Government to come to the House and ask for a further sum of money outside the Annual Estimates altogether, and which the Army Administration or the War Office was to have the management of without any possibility of effective check on the part of the House. He (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) hoped the House would be very chary of entrusting these large sums to the War Minister without some assurance that the expenditure could from time to time be checked by the House. He regarded much of the Statement of the right hon. Gentleman as a mere official letter making the best of things and really avoiding anything of a practical character. The Army was a practical thing, organized and maintained at an immense expense for practical purposes. If the country wanted to know whether it got value for its money, if it wanted to ascertain whether the weapon for which it paid so much was really effective and ready for service at any moment, why in the name of common sense did it not resort to tests? There was absolutely no test used at all with regard to the efficiency or the readiness of the Army for practical purposes. What he ventured to suggest, and what he suggested last year was—and the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State was then good enough to smile complacently at it—something of a very simple and practical character. He suggested that they should test the Army and our military resources, and he would submit to the right hon. Gentleman a plan by which he could do so without any addition to his Army expenditure. They had a number of military divisions covering the whole country; in each of those military districts they had Infantry, Cavalry, Commissariat, Transport, Medical Service, everything, in fact, for effective military operations. They had their Reserve Force and they had their Volunteers. What was easier than to test the whole of their administrative system by giving notice at the beginning of the year that one or other of these military divisions or districts would be called upon during the course of the year to show its efficiency? Suppose the Secretary of State for War, having given that general warning, were to select a particular district, say the York district, and give notice to the general commanding that district that he was to make preparations against an invader at Scarborough in 10 days or a fortnight, and direct that officer to have all the military resources at his command ready to meet the supposed invader. They would thus test not only the real strength of their military resources within the district, but they would test their Commissariat; they would test their Transport; they would test their stores, and they would test the general working of their system. They could ascertain what their resources in that particular district were really worth, and they could ascertain what their Volunteer Force was really worth. His suggestion might be met on the part of the right hon. Gentleman by the plea that its adoption would involve expenditure. Of course it would involve expenditure, and it was necessary to consider how they could economize in one direction in order to be able to enforce this practical test. As he suggested before he suggested now, and he was fortified on this occasion, he was glad to see, by the high authority of Lord Wolseley himself—he said last year that there was a great deal of money wasted in unnecessary moving of troops, in the shifting of regiments from one station to another in the United Kingdom. He believed they might with very great advantage save £50,000, £60,000, or £70,000 a-year on that particular item, and he did not believe it would cost very much more to make the experiment he had suggested in the York district. They could economize on that single item for the movement of troops, which was now so inflated and so perfectly unjustifiable on other grounds than those of mere economy. That was the practical suggestion he made last year, and what was the result? Within three weeks of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War smiling disdainfully at it, the French authorities put it in force; they mobilized some of their troops in one of the Southern Departments, and set the whole of Germany wondering what it was the French authorities were at. The result of that experiment in France—as the right hon. Gentleman, through his Intelligence Department, would be able to ascertain—was such that the whole mobilization arrangments of France were revised, corrected, and made perfect. It was an experiment of immense value to the French War Minister, and the French had no reason to complain of the expenditure, though it was much heavier than was expected. He (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) suggested that if they wanted to test the value of their military administration—if they wished to test their Army resources—they should adopt the plan which was ready at hand, and which was not likely to involve any large expenditure of money. But it should be clearly understood, when this experiment was carried out, that whenever they found a weak spot in the system, that weak spot should be made good, no matter at what cost, and that wherever they found the system broke down by reason of the shortcomings of any particular officer, whether he be a general officer or a lieutenant, that particular officer should be made to suffer for his delinquencies. As it was, on many occasions they had opportunities of judging in a small way of their existing system; but where they had clear proof of shortcomings on the part of officers, there was no result of an unpleasant kind to the officer which was shown to be inefficient. What they wanted was to make their officers understand that each and every one was responsible for the efficiency and complete discharge of the duties entrusted to them. If they found men—no matter what their position might be—unfit for their position, they should get rid of them and have no mercy; then they would have an efficient instrument in the shape of the Army. Until they did something of that kind, they would find that the Army was not in a bit better position than it was at the outbreak of the Crimean War.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) said, that many statements had been made in the course of the debate which were worthy of the consideration of all sorts and conditions of men in all parts of the country, and thanks were due to the hon. and gallant Baronet the Member for North-West Sussex (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) for having brought the question before the House. The Amendment, as submitted to the House, had been supported by men of world-wide reputation, world-wide experience; and he earnestly hoped that the Government, even if they were not able to accede to the very letter of his hon. and gallant Friend's Amendment, would, at all events, be able to give a cordial assent to the spirit of it. He had no intention of prolonging the debate; indeed, there was very little to be said. He ventured, however, for one moment to express dissent from some of the rather pessimistic opinions expressed concerning the Intelligence Department of the Army of this country. He believed that the Intelligence Department, as at present organized under General Brackenbury—an officer who was well known not only in this country but almost in every European Army—was in the highest degree deserving of the confidence of the country. He (Mr. Howard Vincent) would be unwilling the debate should conclude without an expression of the acknowledgments of that branch of the Service with which he had the privilege to be associated for what had been done for them by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War. He (Mr. Howard Vincent) had always taken the very greatest interest, since he had had the honour of a seat in the House, in all that concerned the welfare of the Volunteer Force, and he was sure he had the assent of his hon. Friends who were members of that Force when he said the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War had done a great deal to contribute to the efficiency of the Force. The increase in the Capitation Grant had the cordial approval of the taxpayers of the country; and in spite of what had been said in the course of debate, he was quite certain that out of the Volunteer Force an Army of 150,000 men at the very least—second to none in muscle, in physique, and in courage—would be forthcoming whenever the country needed it. But he hoped that before that period arrived a great improvement might take place in the equipment of the Force. He could not share the consolation his hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the War Department (Mr. Brodrick) derived from the contemplation of the fact that one-fourth of the Volunteer Force were provided with greatcoats. The noble Viscount the Member for the Petersfield Division of Hants (Viscount Wolmer) took comfort in the reflection that the remaining three-fourths might take the field with blankets; but he could not find comfort in that view either. It was exceedingly necessary that the Government should take every possible opportunity they could of improving the equipment of the great National Army. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War had, in his Memorandum, referred to the Auxiliary Forces as those "upon whom our main reliance must necessarily be placed." He was certain that this expression of opinion could not be otherwise than highly encouraging, not only to the Volunteers, but also to the Militia, and that if they were met in the spirit in which the right hon. Gentleman said in his Memorandum they would be met—namely, in a spirit of hearty encouragement from the War Office authorities, their efficiency would improve as years went on, and when the day of need came the country would have no cause to complain of the efficiency of the Volunteer Force.

Mr. GOURLEY (Sunderland) said, that from all he had heard in the course of this discussion he thought the Government would act wisely in accepting the Resolution of the hon. and gallant Baronet the Member for North-West Sussex (Sir Walter B. Barttelot). He did not agree with the proposal of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), who asked for the appointment of a Commission composed entirely of experts. To his (Mr. Gourley's) mind, so far as experts were concerned, that was where the great blot in our system rested. We had too much government by experts and too little government by civilians, and if there were now appointed a Royal Commission or Committee of Inquiry—

he did not care which—it would be good policy to compose it in part of civilians. What had been the main cause of failure in all recent experiences? Why, the main source of failure in the field had been in connection with Commissariat and Transport, and that was a reason why, if they had this Royal Commission or Committee, they should have on it men like Spiers and Pond or Bertram and Roberts. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington had given an illustration of the defects of the existing system—the system they all found fault with. He had referred to our Egyptian experiences—bad food, bad forage, defective clothing, and defective ammunition having been served out. The fact that we had had such an experience proved the necessity of some Parliamentary control over the War Office in the shape of a Royal Commission or Committee of the House. The Memorandum of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War indicated the necessity for an inquiry. He found on page 9, paragraph 11—

> "With regard to the defence of our ports and coaling stations, generally speaking, it may be said that recent improvements in guns have completely altered the conditions of naval attack and defence, and it has appeared to Her Majesty's Government that a general examination of the state of our defences should no longer be delayed."

That paragraph alone proved the necessity of inquiry. It alluded to the altered system of attack and defence. We found that our ships with modern artillery could deal blows at a distance of something like six miles; but what he should like to arrive at was, at what distance could the ports strike ships with modern artillery? Modern artillery had a range of something like five or six miles. Well, was it possible, in making calculations with regard to the defence of our coaling stations and commercial ports, to provide means of attack sufficient to drive off ships at a distance of six miles? He would like to have an expression of opinion from some experts in the House on that question. The engagement which had taken place between the ships and the forts in Egypt had only been at a distance of two or three miles, so that the experience we had gained in that part of the world could not be taken as a guide to what would be likely to happen in the future, if we were at war with a strong Naval Power. He desired to know, in regard to the provision to be made in the future for the defence of our military ports and commercial ports, what was the policy of the Government as to the strength of the forts and the calibre of the guns. He found it was proposed to spend a large amount—£1,200,000—on the fortifications of our coaling stations, military ports, and commercial ports. A large proportion of that sum would be spent on Malta and Gibraltar—places which he had always understood were in themselves actual fortresses. He should like to know from the right hon. Gentleman the Minister for War what kind of works under the new system of defence were to be undertaken at Gibraltar and Malta? Then he would also like to ascertain from the Secretary of State for War what description of forts it was contemplated constructing in connection with our military organization for the defence of our commercial harbours? He thought the experiment with regard to the construction of forts in our commercial harbours was to a large extent unnecessary, for this reason—the only recent experience we had as to what forts could do was that of Plevna, where the Turks made so protracted a stand against the Russians. We all knew that in those celebrated operations the Turks ran up earth forts which defied the Russians for a considerable period. His contention was that whilst we had such an admirable force as the Volunteers the men ought to be made thoroughly conversant with the use of the spade, the pick, and the axe. He did not see why Volunteers should not be engaged in running up earth forts and in mounting the guns with which it was proposed to defend our harbours. He should like to know from the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War what his opinion was with regard to the construction of forts for our military ports and commercial ports? Again, granted that our coaling stations and commercial ports were in what might be considered a reasonable condition of defence, he should like to know what was their stock of coal to be? Did the Government intend in every case to have a sufficient supply of coal at the coaling stations? for it struck him very forcibly that unless they had sufficient supplies of coal on hand to meet emergencies in the event of a war breaking out, they would find that each coaling station would be neither more nor less than a white elephant. Then, with regard to the defence of our home ports, it must be borne in mind that an iron-clad squadron as at present constructed was not able to carry more than five days' fuel, so that the longest period for which an iron-clad could leave its base would be something like two and a-half days. If it was away a longer period a disaster would happen, for it would not have sufficient fuel to enable it to get back into port. He would like an answer to this question —what arrangement had been made with regard to keeping a stock of coal on hand at the various coaling stations for use in the event of war breaking out? His own idea and view with regard to the condition of the Army and Navy was that our chief want was organization. We had the *matériel* and *personnel*, but to his mind—and he would speak plainly —we wanted most of all that which we had never had—namely, a Von Moltke. If we had such an organizer we should find a different state of things prevail not only in connection with our Army, but also in regard to our Navy, and our organization, instead of being a defective one, would be in a large measure perfect. Hence the view he held was that it would be a wise policy on the part of the Government to grant either a Royal Commission, not composed entirely of experts, or a Select Committee of the House composed of experts and civilians, for the purpose of exercising that control over the Army which hitherto no one had possessed.

COLONEL DUNCAN (Finsbury, Holborn) said, that in rising to speak on the Motion of his hon. and gallant Friend the Member for North-West Sussex (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) he felt a little embarrased. He thought they were right in asking for some form of inquiry into the administration of the Army; but, at the same time, he thought they would be wrong if they refused the form of inquiry that had been offered by the Government. He was sure they all meant the same thing—the Military and Naval Members. They wanted to get at the truth and to adopt a means of improving the administration of the Services of the country, and if they could avoid a Division he was sure they would be wise. He did not know that he should have risen to speak at all had it not been for the remarks made a few nights ago by the Financial Secretary to the War Office (Mr. Brodrick)—a Gentleman who, from his (Colonel Duncan's) own experience, he could say had mastered his work in an admirable manner and had always applied the closest attention and the greatest industry to every question brought before him. But the hon. Member had been to some extent infected with the official element which, more or less, permeated the permanent officials. The hon. Member spoke as to the manner born. He told them, almost in terms of resentment, that their Military and Naval Members were, like Oliver Twist, always asking for more. Well, the Military and Naval Members certainly did wish the good of the Service, and sometimes that meant asking for more, and sometimes asking for less; and when the hon. Member had appealed to hon. and right hon. Gentlemen sitting opposite to him to help him, he (Colonel Duncan) could not but feel it a great pity that the hon. Member had mastered his lessons so well as to have forgotten to some extent the interests of the Army, which were the interests the House were now considering. The Army was a reasonable one, and though they were told that the Military Members did not represent the Army, but only represented their constituents, he (Colonel Duncan) wished to observe that they did represent the Army in a very high and special manner. They thought only of the interests of the country, but in thinking of the interests of the country they thought also of the interests of the Army. There was no Secretary for War who had done better service than the present Secretary. He (Colonel Duncan) did not know any document which it had given him greater pleasure to read than the statesmanlike document prepared by the right hon. Gentleman which accompanied the Estimates. He should have been glad if the Estimates themselves had been presented in a better form; but in the right hon. Gentleman's own Report they saw everything to encourage them, and in any criticism they might make he trusted the right hon. Gentleman would not believe that they were actuated by any hostile feeling towards himself. In the first part of the document the right hon. Gentleman had submitted to them he referred to alterations in the organization and administration of the War

Office. He (Colonel Duncan) sincerely trusted everyone in the House would pause before criticizing any one of these alterations. Let them give them a little time to work. He was sure they were all in the right direction, and it would be unfair for them to criticize them yet. Let them pause, and then he was sure that they would see that either the alterations were very good, or that they were not very good. Without exaggerating the duties of experts, and the responsibilities of experts, he was quite sure that steps had been taken in the right direction in handing over the Army to those who best understood military wants. But when they came to other parts of the right hon. Gentleman's document they were entitled to use stronger criticism. He frankly admitted that he could use, with regard to the document, no words except words of praise. The right hon. Gentleman's allusions to the defences of the Empire—that was to say, the coaling stations and the defences of our military ports—were couched in words of the highest statesmanship, and now, for the first time, they had had placed before the country the real necessities of the Empire. He could not speak too highly of the scheme in the Memorandum with regard to the defences of the Empire. In the Estimates themselves, there were many changes made in regard to which he differed from the right hon. Gentleman. With regard to the medical branch of the Army, Mr. Speaker had ruled in the case of another hon. Member that that subject could not be gone into. All he would say, therefore, in regard to it was that it was, of course, necessary to the Army that they should have an efficient Medical Service, and further observations upon the matter he would defer to a future occasion. But it must be remembered that one of the greatest resources of the Army was the Reserve Forces. They were told that the men were not passing through into the Reserve in any large numbers, and they were also warned that men were leaving the Reserves to an extent which the country would some day deplore. Well, it did appear to him that something should be done for the Reserve men, and that they should bear in mind that when they had taken away the cream of the lives of a large number of men, it was not fair to turn them adrift heedless of what became of them, and leaving them without any prospect which was the case in a great number of instances of employment. They had heard that various Government Departments were doing all in their power to give employment to men in the Reserve. This was the answer given to those who made inquiries on the point; but it was not one satifactory either to himself or to those who were interested in the Reserve. As the answer of the First Lord of the Treasury was being given, he could not help remembering a very amusing story told by Artemus Ward. During the American War everyone in a certain village voted his father and brother and cousin into the ranks, but forgot to vote himself, and one wild patriot even went so far as to vote his mother-in-law there. Her Majesty's Government Departments thought it right to employ men who were in the Reserve; but there they stopped—they voted, so to speak, that the men should be employed, but did not employ them themselves to any extent. He would urge the Departments to do all they possibly could to increase the Reserve by setting an example to employers of labour. If there was any danger of the Conscription coming upon us, no doubt much would be done to spur on the Departments to give a fair share of employment to the men who had passed through the ranks of the Army, so as to give an example to ordinary employers of labour. The House would be astonished to hear how many letters he, as a Military Member of the House, received from men who felt that they had a claim on the country, having given up many years of their lives, and that they deserved some support from the State. It had been said that the rule as to the age of the men had been relaxed; but they could not take men of the age of 18, keep them seven years, and find them 18 years of age at the end of the term. It was necessary to relax the age. These men left the Army infinitely better men than they were when they joined it. They left it with something of virtue, loyalty, steadiness, and obedience — qualities which were not very largely developed in some of them when they entered the Service. On leaving the Army their services and their moral and social improvement ought to receive some recognition at the hands of the country. Did they receive it? They did not, for their reception by employers of labour had been utterly inadequate. All over the country were to be found soldiers, who ought to be a great source of strength to the country in the Reserve, in the workhouses and living under conditions which absolutely had the effect of deterring other people from entering the Army. He maintained that a soldier who was well treated and who was contented with his lot was the best recruiting sergeant in the world; but that a soldier who went about with a sense of grievance and was able to tell his fellow-citizens that, after having given up the best years of his life to the country, he was allowed by it to live in want, and was never able to rise from the ranks of the very poorest of the country, was the very worst man they could have to deal with in working up the Army or the voluntary system. They had in this demand for an inquiry perhaps forgotten one great point. So far as he understood, the speech of the hon. Gentleman the Financial Secretary to the War Department (Mr. Brodrick) had deprecated inquiry on the ground that it would reveal the weaknesses of our Army; but, to his mind, a Royal Commission, or a Committee of the House, would not only reveal weaknesses, but would reveal also strength. He did not think that the country understood the great strides which had been made in the Army of late years. The Army had become to an extent utterly unsuspected throughout the country a great scientific profession. Not long ago the heaviest shot fired only weighed some 68 lbs.; but shot was now fired weighing some 1,800 lbs., and whereas the heaviest charge of powder had been 18 lbs., charges were now fired weighing 960 lbs. Such things as this showed what immense strides had been made by the Army, and a Royal Commission, such as was suggested, would show that the Army had not only failures to record, but great successes as well. It was not possible for the country to rest satisfied unless it knew the real condition of the Army, and it could not know that unless an inquiry were granted. They did not know that the Government would grant an inquiry. They had done a great deal for the Army, and were anxious to do a great deal more. People talked of the guns that cracked; but it must not be forgotten that there were also guns that did not crack. Guns were very like men. He did not mean to say that a large proportion of men were cracked; but it could be said of guns, as it had been said of men, that "the evil that they do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones." The strength of these modern guns was almost incredible, and no doubt a great deal to re-establish confidence in our Artillery would be the result of the granting of this inquiry. If it were granted, he did not think that the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War would have any reason to regret it. On the other hand, any attempt to resist an inquiry would, he was sure, produce a wrong impression in the Army. If they did not let the country know the actual strength of the *personnel* and its *matériel*, it would be always living in a fool's paradise, or dreading to know the terrible truth. If an inquiry were given, Members of the House would be very much surprised to find how valuable were the resources of this country. The hon. Gentleman the Financial Secretary evidently feared that it would only be weakness that would be revealed; but he thought that if they had the whole truth before them, the hon. Gentleman would have no cause for regret. He (Colonel Duncan) had been 32 years in the Army, and had been living in daily touch with it, and he could assure the House that never was the Army better or stronger than at this moment.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.) said, he had in the first place to agree with the hon. and gallant Member for North-West Sussex (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) that there ought to be some sort of inquiry into the state of our defences at the present moment; but he looked upon the hon. and gallant Member's proposal as altogether too gigantic for the occasion; for he believed that if a Commission were appointed on the lines laid down by the hon. and gallant Member it would recommend that everything in connection with the Army and Navy should be of the very best. It would recommend the manufacture of 500,000 small-bore rifles; it would recommend the putting of all our forces into apple-pie order, and would very likely recommend a very large increase in the Army. It would, for the purpose of self-defence, recommend the country to go to an enormous and extravagant expense. That was not the only objection he would have to such a Commission. As the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) had pointed out, it would take a long time for such a body to present its Report—the noble Lord, he thought, said four years—which would be by far too long a period. The next objection he took to such an inquiry was that it would have the effect of relieving the Government from responsibility, and it was the Government which should bear responsibility for the state of the defences of the Empire. It would be easy to make the Government safe if someone would undertake to pay the cheques and procure the taxes necessary to pay the cost of large increases in the Army. It would be very easy to have 50,000 more men and plenty of guns and horses if the taxpayers were willing to pay the money and such expenditure was recommended by a Commission. If for any experiment they had to carry out in consequence of a Report of a Commission they were called upon to pay £1,000,000, the bill would be regarded as a pretty large one, and he had no doubt that an experiment of a much cheaper description would serve the necessities of the time. But no doubt if the state of things were such as the noble Lord had pointed out in such glowing colours, and a Commission were appointed which would report in six weeks, such a delightful Commission they certainly ought to have. He (Colonel Nolan) had been on the Committee appointed on the Motion of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) which inquired into the circumstances of the Egyptian Campaign. That Committee found that a great many of the Supply Departments had failed in numerous respects, and had wasted a vast amount of money. They had not thrown the money about recklessly and paid no attention to the expenditure, but they had fallen into a great many mistakes—for instance, they had bought the wrong kind of flour—flour that could not stand the hot climate, and so on. But what happened in connection with the Committee. The whole of the Members of the War Office used to attend the Committee every day. He used to joke with Members of the Government in regard to the inquiry, and to one of them he said—"You will not be able to carry on this Committee with all your officials in this room if you should have a military expedition going on at the same time;" and the reply made to him was—"No doubt you are right." His observation had turned out to be accurate, because in the following year there was an expedition, and the Committee was not continued; the result being that they were unable to report as to what had been the system. The next inquiry he was on was Lord Morley's Committee, and in the course of that inquiry they did not find that the Departments were in very bad order. He (Colonel Nolan), however, had signed a Minority Report. He had practically signed that by himself; and, though he was almost alone in his view, he was glad to see that the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War had acted very largely upon his Minority Report. The third Committee had been appointed on the suggestion of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, and the right hon. Gentleman the present Secretary of State for War had, in the most praiseworthy manner, shown himself not only willing to accept all the recommendations of that Committee, but to be guided by everything which came out in the course of the inquiry. His (Colonel Nolan's) experience of these Committees was that they were most useful. They stirred up the War Office, and were the only things that would stir up that Office, on account of the prevailing system. The system was to appoint to the War Office statesmen, or Members who wished to be statesmen—some of them were statesmen, and some, perhaps, would be in the fruition of time. They did not ask a Member, when they first put him into the War Office, whether he knew anything at all about War Office matters. They selected very often clever men, no doubt, but men being entirely ignorant of the Department. No doubt, these Gentlemen soon acquired a knowledge of their Departments; but they were soon promoted to other places. Great statesmen had to be in the Cabinet in order to prepare measures of the most vital consequences; and it was necessary that the Prime Minister should appoint the best men to take over those difficult duties. The young Ministers or statesmen, when placed at the War Office under the present constitution of that Department, were entirely in the hands of permanent officials, and it was, therefore, of great use to have these Committees, as they had the effect of frightening the officials. A Committee or Commission was able to cross-examine the officials from evidence they got from outside people. The best inquiries, no doubt, were Committees of the House of Commons, not because Members of the House of Commons knew more about these subjects than everyone else, but because they were much more acceptable than other people. People could come to see Members of the House, and make recommendations to them. People availed themselves of the opportunity of coming down into the Lobby—probably availed themselves too much of these opportunities — and primed Members upon subjects as to which they had special knowledge. In this way, a Committee of the House of Commons became far more weighty in dealing with these matters than any other inquiry. Then the House of Commons was more independent. What, personally, did Members of the House of Commons care about the Army? They were at high pressure to-night with regard to it, no doubt, but a fortnight hence they would be equally at high pressure on the subject of Ireland or the Local Government Bill. The House might forget these Army questions too rapidly if it were not for the fact of these Committees keeping the subject before their minds and keeping them up to their work on such matters. If the Committee could finish their work before June, their Report would be most valuable, and there could be another discussion in the House, and everybody would work up for it. In his opinion, the very worst of all forms of inquiry—the most absolutely useless and damning form—was a Departmental Committee. Such a Committee would simply say that everything was right and beautiful, and would end in recommending, probably, the appointment of two more officials at large salaries, and the thing would be done accordingly. He thought a Commission would be of value if it reported quickly; but the proposal of the hon. and gallant Baronet who had moved the Amendment — though he had the greatest respect for his opinion on these subjects—was altogether too gigantic. If the Amendment were adopted as it at present stood, they would be handing the functions of the House of Commons to the Commission. With reference to the recommendations of Lord Morley's Committee, he was glad the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War had not adopted the Report of the majority, and had not laid it down that a certain number of appointments should be handed over to military men and a certain number to civilians. The right hon. Gentleman had adopted the right principle in deciding upon taking the best man for each Department. As to what had been said with regard to the 43-ton gun, it was true that it had been manufactured by Colonel Maitland; but Colonel Maitland was not responsible for the failure; that was the fault of the designer, who had not known what was discovered by Herr Krupp, that it required two pieces of metal to make a gun. The 43-ton gun had been manufactured in only one piece, and that had been the cause of its failure. The whole of the Committee were unanimously of opinion that they had got the fullest information from Colonel Maitland, and that he had shown himself a perfect master of every detail of iron and steel. They had had some of the best steel men of the United Kingdom on the Committee, and they all pronounced that opinion. In addition to that, Colonel Maitland had done one of the most valuable things that had ever been done in connection with the Army of this country. He was the first man to introduce breech-loading guns into the country. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) had no doubt been the first in Ministerial circles who had gone in for them. The right hon. Gentleman had been two years behind himself (Colonel Nolan), but he was sorry to say that he had only approved of the principle just as he was going out of Office. Colonel Maitland, however, had been the first to introduce the principle of breech-loading guns in the Arsenals, and carried it through. For a long time this country had gone on a wrong tack, but instead of England being in the last position as to ordnance as it used to be in, it was now numbered in the first position in Europe in respect of its guns. But Colonel Maitland had introduced another thing. He had been anxious to change from iron to steel, and had written to the War Office on the subject, without being able to get a satisfactory answer. At last, however, he had set up a steel factory for himself—converting an iron factory into a steel factory, and the Government had not raised any objection. A man who would do that was undoubtedly the proper man to be put at the head of the whole artillery manufacture of the country. He (Colonel Nolan) did not think the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War could have made a better selection. There was another point with regard to which he (Colonel Nolan) was almost alone in the minority in regard to it, but still it was a suggestion which, if it had been adopted, would have effected the saving of £500,000. It was a point which had not come before the Committee of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, and therefore, he had no opportunity of examining upon it, although, if there was a new inquiry, he hoped that the matter would be gone into. The principle to which he alluded was one which was adopted by all merchants in their private businesses. It was thought that they should buy their stores by open tender—by open advertisements. It was all very well to say that there was a list of firms in Ireland, but he knew that many firms were kept away by the difficulties connected with this arrangement. The Government did not buy their goods—or used not to do so—by open tender, but confined their purchases to two or three firms, and it was the same with regard to almost everything else they required. The consequence was that the Government very often bought things at a very much larger price than what they could have got them for if they had bought them by open tender. When he said "open tender," he meant that the Government should advertise for what they wanted; but he did not mean that they should always accept the lowest tender. No doubt they should do so unless there was strong reason to the contrary, and they would in most cases do so, knowing that if they did not their conduct was likely to be made the subject of severe criticism in the House. On the Committee of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington he had asked the Director General of Artillery whether he could not often get goods under cost price, and this official had replied that he would not care for such goods. But it was a fact that they could often get goods of the best quality under cost price. It frequently paid a manufacturer, who, no doubt, made up for it afterwards, to manufacture under cost price rather than discharge his hands and discontinue his business. Goods in this way were sometimes to be obtained 10 and 20 per cent under cost price. It was not, however, from permanent officials that they were likely to get these recommendations. He agreed that there was nothing to be said against the rectitude of these gentlemen; but they were not experts on all subjects, and they could not always rely upon their own judgment, the result being that there was a constant temptation for them to deal with a limited number of contractors, knowing that these contractors, in order to retain the monopoly, would not be likely to supply them with inferior articles. The result of this was that very often much larger sums were paid than the articles purchased could be procured for elsewhere. He would strongly recommend the War Department to look into this matter very carefully, and see if they could get the manufacturers to deal with them more through open tender than they had done up to the present. He did not think in other respects they would be able to save much in the Manufacturing Departments, which were very well managed. He did not, on the whole, think that the right hon. Gentleman would be able to make much reduction in the Manufacturing Departments. It appeared to him that the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington was not quite fair in his remarks when he compared the two English Army Corps with the three Army Corps in Germany, and said that the latter cost little more than half of what the former cost. He pointed out that there was a great discrepancy in this respect between the two countries, the pay of the officers being much less in Germany than in England. It might be, however, that the right hon. Gentleman would be able to make some improvements in this direction. He was glad to see that the right hon. Gentleman was making some efforts at reduction; and, among other things, he proposed to reduce the expense of the Medical Department. That was a very good step to take, because there was considerable room for improvement in the Department. He (Colonel Nolan) knew of the case of a man of 44 years of age who was receiving £450 a-year from Government; he was a good officer and willing to work longer, but the Government offered him £500 a-year to go out. That was an instance of the way in which the Medical Department was managed. The right hon. Gentleman had said that the system of the Paymasters' Department was extravagant, and that he was going to make some reductions there also. There could be no doubt that the whole system of the Department was cumbersome and expensive. For instance, the men were obliged to give up their old clothing; among other things their caps. If they did not give up that they were fined a farthing, and that farthing had to be entered in the book, and by the time it was got it must cost the country a considerable sum. But there was a large number of other articles of old clothing treated in this way, and the trouble taken with them would be represented by a very large sum. The right hon. Gentleman had no doubt paid attention to these matters, and would, probably, remedy the defects complained of. He (Colonel Nolan) was glad there was not to be any increase in the expenditure for schools. Nothing, in his opinion, was more ridiculous than this expenditure, which was all very well a few years ago, but was quite unnecessary now that board schools had sprung up in England and Ireland. The soldiers hated the system which required them to attend schools, and certainly the taxpayers hated it, because they had to pay for the schoolmasters. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War need not be afraid that he will have too many new charges put on the Estimates. The permanent officials would Boycott any man who came forward with new items of expenditure, but they were determined not to allow anything to be taken off the Estimates if they could help it, and it was to that point the right hon. Gentleman should direct his attention. Altogether, the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War had had a very uncomfortable time of it; but, for the short space that he had been in Office, he (Colonel Nolan) thought the right hon. Gentleman had done exceedingly well. He believed, however, the right hon. Gentleman could effect further economies without knocking out a single man. From that point of view a further inquiry, instead of injuring, would help the right hon. Gentleman; but to go into the wide question of the defence of the Empire would simply be equivalent to shuffling the whole problem for a couple of years, and then they would be told to spend £7,000,000 or £8,000,000.

Mr. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN (Stirling, &c.): I desire to make a few observations on the subject of the proposal of my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for North - West Sussex (Sir Walter B. Barttelot), especially as that proposal has been developed tonight by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill). Now, having listened to most of the speeches in the debate, I may, perhaps, not be saying too much if I express the opinion that there may be some advantage in recalling the attention of the House to some very elementary facts relating to the nature of the Constitutional system under which we live and conduct our Business. The direct responsibility to Parliament of the Ministers who control the affairs of the nation is the very keystone of that system, and no innovation could be imagined more fatal to the Constitution than to adopt any change whatever which, whether temporarily or permanently, invalidated that Ministerial responsibility on which our whole system rests. I observe it has lately become the fashion, not so much among practical politicians as among eminent men in the country, literary, scientific, sometimes judicial, who tender to the world their opinion, or who may be called in to give their opinion on some branch of administration, to speak lightly of representative government, covertly if not openly to sneer at it, and to attribute to it some supposed defects. They speak of it as being cumbrous, unreasoning, illogical, and costly. Now I venture to say that, whether it can or cannot be proved that representative government is open to such objections, there is no doubt that in the view of the people of this country its advantages greatly outweigh any disadvantages which may attach to it; and it is the first business of this House to see that by nothing that it does shall that principle of Ministerial responsibility suffer damage at our hands. It is easy, however, to see that that principle is endangered, not only by the proposal of the hon. and gallant Member for North-West Sussex, but by certain other ideas which are in vogue at the present day. In the first place, with regard to that proposal, I agree with every word said by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) on Monday night. It is not only that the duties to be transferred to such a Commission are among the most ordinary functions of the Executive Government, whose discretion in the matter would be superseded. It is not only that the questions with which the Commission would deal are questions which depend largely upon matters of policy which would not be submitted at all to the Commission. It is not only that the recommendations of the Commission would for years to come hamper the action of the Executive. It is not only that the Commission would not be answerable to Parliament for its recommendations, or for the success of those recommendations, and that on the contrary, it might happen that those recommendations would be used to cover or excuse neglect or mistakes on the part of the Executive Government. Besides, and above all these considerations —serious enough in themselves—there is this further consideration, to my mind the most fatal of all, that while the men who would compose such a body—eminent men no doubt, and capable and patriotic—would make suggestions involving large expenditure, they would themselves have no share whatever in the task of finding the cash necessary to defray the cost of the expenditure which they recommended. The point is not one of mere theory, but of practice. It may well be thought that the Secretary of State for War has enough to do in deciding questions as to the organization and establishments of the Army, and the supply of stores for its use. But, besides this, he is a Member of the Cabinet, who knows what burden can be placed upon the taxpayer, and he has, therefore, the further task of adjusting the demands, not unreasonably made upon him by his Department, to what he knows to be the money available. This is apparently regarded nowadays as a somewhat low and grovelling view of the case. The eminent Judge who presided over the Commission which has often been alluded to, and who in his Report frequently allows his rhetoric to carry him off his feet, in talking of the present system, by which professional officers make full demands, and the Minister reduces these to the amount that can be reasonably spent on Army service, says that it cannot possibly succeed, because it is a system of "extravagance controlled by stinginess." The words he uses, of course, merely beg the whole question; it might equally be described as a system of "generosity checked by prudence." It is, in fact, a system of common sense, and it is the system we each try, with more or less success, to apply in our common daily life. But the House will observe—and this is the point I wish to make—that the whole of this necessity, which constitutes the greatest difficulty of administration, of having regard to the burdens to be laid on the taxpayer, would be altogether absent from the Commission. But I am bound to say, bad as was the suggestion of the hon. and gallant Member for the North-West Division of Sussex, it was not bad enough for the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: What?

Mr. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN: I said, bad as the proposal was, it was not bad enough for the noble Lord, for he proposes something worse, and would constitute the Commission entirely of military men. He would capitulate to the demands of the military men, and allow them to fix what they required as the expenditure of the country. That would practically be handing over the control of the expenditure to soldiers, and I need hardly point out that such an arrangement is practically irreconcilable with responsibility in this House. There was a time—the time of pocket boroughs—when it was possible to secure the presence in this House of the best soldiers and the best sailors of the day; but that has passed away. No one will suggest that the administration of the Army and Navy should be placed in he hands of anyone but soldiers and sailors of the highest rank, character, and distinction in the Profession; and although we have in this House—as Members of the House—officers who are highly distinguished and deserving of all praise and respect, it does not follow that we find among them individual officers who would fill adequately the high places to which I have referred. We may, therefore, put aside as impracticable the idea of extinguishing the civilian element in the administration of the Army; but, even far short of that complete transference of power to the heads of the Army, it seems to me that in the comparatively limited scheme of the present Secretary of State there is some danger of mistake. The right hon. Gentleman intends by his scheme to concentrate upon the Military Department in the War Office the responsibility for furnishing the Army with all stores—both for determining and stating the requirements, and also for supplying them. But to whom will it be responsible? It will not have the responsibility of which I have been speaking—namely, direct responsibility to this House; the responsibility will be to the Secretary of State. He will remain the person responsible to Parliament; and wherever that responsibility lies, there will also be the power. It is the Secretary of State, assisted by civilians, who really is the master hand, and I am afraid, therefore, if the other impression has prevailed it may lead to some disappointment. It certainly will lead to disappointment if it is supposed that the step now taken will greatly increase the power of the Military Authorities. Nor will it do in future for the right hon. Gentleman or his successors to use the plea, in order to cover errors or neglect, that he has given the control in these matters to the soldiers; the responsibility will be his, and his alone. We are told, indeed—and I think some witnesses who were examined before the Committee of the noble Lord have rather tended to convey that impression—that if the Military Authorities were allowed to have their own way great economies would be effected. Well, that was a promise that was made in a sketchy way, but I am not aware of the ground for it, and our experience hardly justifies it. We have a very large department of public expenditure placed practically in the hands of a most distinguished body of men—I mean the Corps of Royal Engineers. They have had for years the charge of the whole business of building barracks and erecting fortifications in this country. I do not wish to say a word in disparagement of them; but I will say that the very last quality which would be attached to their management is the attribute of economy. Then, again, we are told that if civilians were dispensed with, and if the Military Authorities had it all in their own hands alterations of method and organization would be more readily adopted. This, also, I venture to question. On the Headquarters Staff of the Army at present there are officers of distinction and experience, and of enlightened and progressive views. Those officers have been in favour of the great reforms of recent years: of the abolition of Purchase, whereby the commissioned ranks of the Army were relieved from the incubus of money investment; of enlistment for short service, adopted at a time when long service had notoriously failed; and of giving to the Infantry a more efficient and elastic organization. But will any one of those distinguished officers say that a single one of those reforms would have been carried into effect if it had not been for the aid, the influence, and even the pressure of the civilian administrators in the War Office, backed by public opinion? Therefore, I regard with some degree of scepticism the promises which depend upon the weakening of civilian control in the War Office. Coming back to the Amendment of my hon. and gallant Friend, it practically means increased expenditure. No doubt he would say it would be made up of savings from the extravagant cost of the Army, and here he joins hands with the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington. Perhaps the noble Lord will allow me to say that I heard his speech with surprise and deep disappointment. There was a great deal of interesting matter in it, great knowledge of particular features of Army organization, and there was a great desire to expose anything open to criticism in the proposals of his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War; but I failed to see the signs of his ardent love for economy. The noble Lord has done such good service in awakening public interest in the subject, and in making economy popular, that I hardly like even to appear not fully to appreciate his position; but I would say that in the animadversions which he made on the existing state of affairs sufficient account was not taken of the difficulties in our way. I agree with the noble Lord as to the costliness of the Army, and I believe great reductions could be made in its cost on condition—and that is an essential condition—that all persons concerned or interested in the matter co-operate for that purpose. But there is no use of underrating the obstacles which stand in our way in this country. The noble Lord has referred to the case of Germany. That is an instance with reference to which we ought to bear in mind the French proverb—*Comparaison n'est pas raison.* In attempting a comparison we must be sure that the circumstances are parallel. The noble Lord, for instance, quoted the case of a Cavalry regiment at Berlin which had perfect independence, financial and administrative, which was in all respects *totus teres atque rotundus,* having its money and supplies in its own hand. But such a system is incompatible with our rules of Parliamentary account. The noble Lord left out of consideration the fact that we have in this House an organization for the purpose of examining and auditing the expenditure of public money in this country; and the truth is that the cause of the greater part of the centralization complained of—certainly the cause of the bloated scale on which the War Office is established — is the jealous control exercised by this House and its Accounts Committee over the expenditure of public money. We have, however, some experience of systems in which officers of regiments have been allowed to manage their own affairs; and I am not sure that the history of the clothing Colonels should lead us to renew any such proposal. I admit that the picture which the noble Lord draws, in comparing the German Army with ours, is startling in the extreme, but you do not dispose of the case by saying that you make allowance for conscription. In Germany every civil interest in the country, public and private, is practically placed at the disposal of their great military organization. Our Estimates have, at least, the merit of bringing to the surface and placing before the country practically every item of the cost of the Army and Navy Services. But in Germany, on the other hand, apart from the power they have of dipping into other funds, there is a great deal of expenditure practically incurred by the people of the country which is really incapable of being assessed in figures at all. It must also be borne in mind that the necessities, and, therefore, the system, of Germany are simple, uniform, and homogeneous in character. Germany has no foreign service; she has no India, no small wars; the one thing which she has to prepare for is a great European war, which would be conducted either in her own territory or within some conterminous country similar to her own. She, therefore, knows what she has to provide for; and while she is thus obliged to maintain portentous military establishments, from the necessity for which our insular position happily frees us, her position admits of a uniformity of system which in our small Army is impossible. I would not, however, despair in this country, if we had a *tabula rasa,* of creating an organization for the Army much cheaper and much more efficient than we have, and be it remembered that the organization of the Army is the key to the question. What has our experience been? In this country, wherever we turn, if we wish to make the slightest improvement, we are met by vested interests, by prejudices, by prescription, by sentiment, and by traditions of which we may have our own opinion, but which it is impossible for us to overlook, and which are so supported by opinion both within and without the Army, as well as by opinion in the House, that they cannot be ignored. I speak of the past with some experience, and I should be happy indeed if, under the stimulus of the noble Lord, we may be able in the future to overcome those obstacles. I shall mention one or two illustrations which have come within my own knowledge. In looking broadly at the Estimates, the most striking feature is the enormous amount of the Non-Effective Vote, which reaches the sum of £3,750,000. Of this sum out-pensions to soldiers cost £1,750,000. Not a penny of that sum, let me say, has been incurred owing to the claims of any man enlisted since short service was introduced. It is the legacy which comes to us from the long service system, and I believe it has now reached its highest point. Passing from the men, a much more significant item is the retirement of officers, amounting to nearly £1,500,000. What is the history of that sum? Some years ago Purchase was abolished, and I do not think there are many hon. Members who now doubt that the abolition of Purchase was in itself a good thing. At the time it was abolished it was thought necessary, in consequence of those strong feelings to which I have referred, to make a promise to the Army that the flow of promotion would be kept up to the standard then prevailing. It was an unfortunate circumstance, because the flow of promotion was at that time above its normal rate. A Royal Commission, with an eminent Judge at its head—and let the House mark here the effect of a Royal Commission — was appointed to look into the question. It made several recommendations, and among other things it recommended an elaborate scheme of compulsory retirement up and down the line of a man's career in the Army. The Government of the day — not a Liberal Government — hastily, though not unnaturally, adopted *en bloc* the recommendations of that Commission, and the result has been nothing but expense to the taxpayer and discomfort and grievance in the Army ever since. All the efforts of succeeding Secretaries of State have been directed to modifying the evils thus created. I am speaking my own opinion when I say that the whole plan upon which that scheme and subsequent action of Governments were founded is entirely wrong. I disapprove of it from beginning to end, but I do not blame those who adopted it, for the reason that in the state of public opinion which then existed they could not have taken any other course. But if it had been in Germany, does anyone suppose that such a scheme would have been adopted? My idea is that in the Army rank should follow duty, and the officers should be selected for the duty to be performed. We should thus afford reasonable retirement, but avoid all compulsory terms. But how was it possible to adopt such a system in this country, with all the sacred claims of officers, and the jealousy with which any departure from the old principle of seniority is regarded. In fact, when the principle of selection began to be used somewhat more freely there was hardly an officer promoted but a question was asked in the House, or certain paragraphs appeared in the newspapers about it, and the words favouritism and jobbery were freely thrown about. Another instance occurred with reference to the organization and localization of Infantry. I well remember that in 1871, when I first went to the War Office as Financial Secretary, I was at once handed papers by several able men on this subject. It was the problem of the day. Everyone was agreed that the system of organizing our Infantry in single battalions with nothing to depend upon but themselves was an ineffective system. It had been found in the Crimea that the battalions which belonged to the Rifle Brigade and the Guards maintained a condition of efficiency long after the single battalion regiments had become practically extinct. There were, accordingly, proposals for regiments of two, three, and four battalions. My own belief is that three would be better than two, and four better than three. But what would it have involved? It would have involved the doubling of all the regiments in the British Army, and the obliteration from a large part of it of all those sacred memories and those records of past glories which are attached to the different regiments. It would have involved something more. There arose the question of county interests and county jealousies; each county in England insisted on having at least a regiment of its own; every country town must remain the headquarters of a Militia battalion; and in the face of all those difficulties it is small blame to those who were responsible that they had to adopt a compromise. They adopted a system of linked battalions. That went on for some years, and had to be replaced by a more thorough amalgamation of the battalions; but the whole system has resulted in the duplication of brigade depôts at great expense beyond what was necessary, and at the same time it fails of full efficiency, because of the modifications and the compromises which the influences to which I referred compelled us to adopt. I think these considerations go far to show why it is our Army costs so much more than the German Army. Does the House imagine that if some new organization was found necessary in Germany any modification or compromise would be for a moment tolerated in favour of local jealousies, however natural, or of traditional associations, however honourable and worthy they might be? Now, Sir, I would venture to say that it is not enough to make economic speeches, as the noble Lord sometimes does. It is not enough for him to endeavour in Committee upstairs to expose anomalies and extravagances. If this House is really desirous of seeing economies effected, it must set its face against, and refuse all encouragement to, those sentiments and interests, such as those to which I have referred, which prevent the adoption of a better system. The House, also, must set its face strongly against individual proposals for expenditure sought to be forced on responsible Ministers. I trust I am not saying too much if I warn the House against giving any countenance to the growing tendency which is shown by various classes of men in the Army and Navy to enter into associations for enforcing their own interests. I have received within the last few days circulars from the chief engine-room artificers, the gunners, Royal Navy; and the Army quartermasters. These classes of public servants form associations, they earwig Members of Parliament, they canvass for interest in the constituencies, and I have even heard of an hon. Member who interested himself on behalf of a certain class being presented by his clients with a handsome piece of plate. What is the result? Concessions are made to these various classes, not from conviction of the justice of their claims, but on account of their importunity. Other classes require similar treatment, and so the ball is kept rolling. And besides classes and individuals in the public Service, other interests in the country are desirous of an increased expenditure, and hon. Members are often made their unconscious mouthpiece. There are particular localities, particular trades, particular firms, particular contractors or inventors, whose interest lies in pushing and urging, under the guise of patriotism, certain forms of expenditure; and I trust hon. Members will pardon me if I venture—having had a long experience—to warn them against being led into taking action, in all innocence, on behalf of such interests—action which can only be mischievous and discouraging to honest and prudent administration. These are some of the causes of the excessive cost compared with the efficiency of our Army system. The remedy is to be found in the exhibition by the House of a resolutely economical temper, and a determination not to allow itself to be influenced by individual interest, prejudice, or sentiment. It will require much nerve, patience, and perseverance to do this. If it is done, it is, in my opinion, well within the capacity of statesmanship to furnish at a more reasonable cost a greater and more effective force than we now possess; but of this I am sure, that the worst step that we could take—the worst blunder we could commit—would be, by the appointment of a Commission such as has been suggested, to relieve from his proper and direct responsibility the Secretary of State for War, who is the responsible Minister of the Crown.

Mr. E. STANHOPE: It is only by the indulgence of the House that I can answer the questions that have been put to me. First of all, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) asked me two questions with regard to the scheme. The first question was whether the control over the Director General of Ordnance Factories was complete. No doubt there is complete control over the Director General, as he cannot undertake any expenditure without the sanction of the Financial Secretary. With regard to his second question, I have only to say that my intention is that those spending the money shall have full responsibility for it, and I will make any alteration of words that may be required to give effect to that intention. With respect to the question of the hon. and gallant Member for North Galway (Colonel Nolan) in regard to small stoppages from soldiers' pay, I will take care that for the future small charges of less than 3*d.* for old clothing deficient will be dealt with so as to avoid their being matter of account. As regards the very admirable speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stirling (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman), I entirely agree with him as to the importance of preserving the responsibility of the Secretary of State for War. That responsibility is, no doubt, complete when he acts on the advice of his Military Advisers; but it exists to a greater extent when he differs from them. If he agrees with them, as the Secretary of State did with regard to the reduction of the Horse Artillery, he sometimes gets into a great scrape with the country; but if he differs from them, he takes upon himself a still greater responsibility. I do not think anyone can accuse me of being unable to trust my Military Advisers. I have great confidence in their experience, and I think that at no previous time was the Army so thoroughly determined to do its duty to the country, or the chief advisers of the Secretary of State so thoroughly trained for their duty and so desirous of carrying it out. Under their advice I have initiated the reforms which I have explained to the House, and which, in spite of some criticism, will, I believe, receive the favourable judgment of the country. With respect to the Estimates before us, it is necessary for the service of the country that the two first Votes for men and money should be taken to-night. No one is more anxious than I that the hon. Member for Preston should have an opportunity of bringing forward the Question of which he has given Notice; but I must appeal to him to postpone the speech he intended to make to-night to another occasion. On our part we will undertake to bring on a Vote at as early a period as possible to give him the opportunity he desires.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: If the Votes are going to be taken upstairs, how can the Government bring them on here?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: That is a difficulty. If my noble Friend will agree in accelerating the progress of Vote 12 in the Committee upstairs it can then be discussed here at any early day.

Sir WALTER B. BARTTELOT: May I put one question to my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury? It has been proposed to us that a Royal Commission should inquire "To what extent our present naval and military system is adapted to the national wants." That Commission is to have full powers, to be a small Commission of eminent men, and is to report to this House as soon as possible. I wish to ask whether that is the proposal which my right hon. Friend makes in substitution of the Motion?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I said on Monday evening that the Government were perfectly prepared to give an inquiry of the character which has been mentioned by my hon. and gallant Friend. But as regards this particular Motion, we can only meet it by a direct negative. I have already explained to the House that we have no alternative.

Sir WALTER B. BARTTELOT: Do I understand that it is to be a Royal Commission according to the words I have read out?

[No reply.]

Sir WALTER B. BARTTELOT repeated his question, and asked for a decided answer.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I stated on Monday that I was prepared to grant an inquiry in these terms—

> "The extent to which our present naval and military systems, as at present organized and administered, are adapted to the national wants."

But I distinctly refused to grant a Commission which should in any way lessen the responsibility of Her Majesty's Government, or which should in any way refer to the amount of force required or to the provision to be made. I told my hon. Friend that I was prepared to grant any inquiry which would not in the slightest degree lessen the responsibility of the Government of the day.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I should like to understand what the system is which is to be inquired into. Is it to be an inquiry into the organization of the Army, or into the organization and administration of the War Office? Is the inquiry to be into the organization of the Army, or into the organization of those who manage and control the Army?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I think that my right hon. Friend will see that it is utterly impossible for me to debate at this hour of the night what the meaning of this word "system" is. I can do no more than adhere strictly to the words in which I expressed the intention of the Government on Monday evening. I then expressed the meaning which the Government attached to them.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: May I ask one question? Were these words which my right hon. Friend has read out to the House agreed upon between him and my hon. and gallant Friend before the debate began this evening?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: No, Sir. There was no agreement whatever between my hon. and gallant Friend and myself. I went to my hon. and gallant Friend yesterday and gave him the words, and he took them into his consideration. We arrived at no agreement whatever on the subject.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: Does the right hon. Gentleman retreat from those words?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: No; I do not retreat from anything I have ever said.

Sir HENRY HAVELOCK-ALLAN (Durham, S.E.): I do not in the slightest degree desire to controvert anything which the right hon. Gentleman has now said in extreme good faith; but, having been one of those who accompanied the hon. and gallant Member for North-West Sussex (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) in his interview with the right hon. Gentleman, I must say that the right hon. Gentleman did not convey to me the impression that he has just now communicated to the House. I am in the recollection of the House when I say that the word "Commission" with regard to that inquiry has several times been used by Ministers and by those on the Front Bench in the course of this discussion, and I can only express on my own part, and on the part of many others with whom I am acting in this matter—I believe including a very large number of Members independent of Party on both sides of the House—that we now hear with extreme regret that the proposed inquiry instead of being a Royal Commission is only to be a Committee. Is it to be a Royal Commission? If the right hon. Gentleman will say that it is to be so, I will apologize for taking up the time of the House in asking this question.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I have already said that I have never changed from the words which I have used. The words agreed upon by my Colleagues and myself on Monday evening I read out to the House. I adhere to them, and I adhere to every word I said on Monday evening. My hon. and gallant Friend will bear me out, and the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite will bear me out, as to the effect of the interview I had yesterday.

Mr. CHILDERS: We on this Bench are anxious in this matter of an inquiry to support the right hon. Gentleman. One question we now want to ask is—Is the inquiry to be in respect of the strength and expenditure, or only with respect to the organization of the Army? If it is only with respect to the organization of the Army, we are perfectly satisfied.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: That is so, Sir. I have expressly kept out any question of strength and expenditure. The words I have read do not include any question of strength, material, stores, financial provision, or of fortifications. I distinctly refused to admit any such questions whatever as matters of inquiry by the Commission.

Sir EDWARD HAMLEY (Birkenhead): As one of those favoured with the interview yesterday, I will say that up to the present moment I remained under the absolute impression that there was an agreement in the terms set forth in the Resolution that has just been read by my hon. and gallant Friend behind me.

Sir HENRY HAVELOCK-ALLAN then again asked whether it was to be a Royal Commission?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: Yes.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question proposed.

Mr. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's) who had an Amendment on the Paper relating to contracts for works under the War Department in Ireland, next rose, and was about to address the House, when——

Mr. W. H. SMITH rose and said: I must appeal to you, Sir, that the Question be now put.

Question put accordingly, "That the Question be now put."

The House *divided:*—Ayes 250; Noes 75: Majority 175.—(Div. List, No. 32.)

Main Question put.

The House *divided:*—Ayes 268; Noes 63: Majority 205.—(Div. List, No. 33.)

SUPPLY—ARMY ESTIMATES, 1888-9.

Supply—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

(1.) 149,667, Land Forces.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I would appeal to hon. Gentlemen in all parts of the House to allow this Vote for men, and also the Vote for money, to be taken to-night, when I assure them that this is absolutely necessary for the Public Service. A full opportunity will be afforded on a future occasion for the discussion which hon. Members may desire to raise. I exceedingly regretted having been compelled to make the last Motion. That Motion was not prompted by any discourtesy to the hon. Gentleman who rose on the opposite Benches (Mr. Murphy); but, under the circumstances I have referred to, it was impossible for the Government to accept a continuation of the discussion. There will be, as I have remarked, and the Government will do all in their power to promote, full opportunity for discussion of the Estimates in the public interest; and, therefore, having regard to the short time at the disposal of the Government, I trust the Committee will allow these Votes to be taken.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): I hope, on the undertaking given by the right hon. Gentleman that there will be a future opportunity for discussion, that the Committee will allow these Votes to be taken. It would be a very bad beginning of an economical career if we were to pass the Votes for the men and money without any discussion. That would be a singular way of inaugurating a reformed Army Scheme. But as it is distinctly understood that there will be at an early day an opportunity of raising all questions that it may be necessary to raise, I do not think it unreasonable that the Government should be allowed to take the Votes to-night.

Mr. PARNELL (Cork) said, he had, of course, nothing to do with the question referred to by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) as to the necessity of a general discussion on the Votes which the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House desired to obtain that evening. He agreed with the right hon. Gentleman that a general discussion was most desirable; but from the point of view of his hon. Friends and himself they did not ask for any such discussion. At the same time, he could have wished that the First Lord of the Tresaury had made his appeal a little sooner. He was quite sure that neither his hon. Friend the Member for one of the Divisions of the City of Dublin (Mr. Murphy), nor any other of his hon. Friends, had any desire or intention of preventing the Government obtaining these Votes to-night; but his hon. Friend, very legitimately, had put a Motion in his name on the Paper, and the right hon. Gentleman, without making any appeal to him, which he thought under the circumstances he might have done, on his rising at once proceeded to apply force—he had taken that course before making that gentle appeal to the better feelings and spirit of hon. Members which he had since very properly made. He did not object to the tone of the right hon. Gentleman, but he thought that appeal might have been made sooner. With regard to the special question in which his hon. Friend was interested, he trusted he would now be allowed to make the observations which he desired to make, and which would not have occupied many minutes, which, so far as he (Mr. Parnell) conceived, would not have prevented the Government from taking these two Votes, and which, he submitted, his hon. Friend had a right to make.

Mr. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's) said, he had to thank his hon. Friend the Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) for clearing away the obstacle to his being heard on a subject on which he was about to offer some remarks when the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House applied the Closure Rule. He should now, in the fewest possible words, call the attention of the Committee to the subject on which he had before intended to address the House. First, with regard to the system in connection with the appointment of a surveyor and as to the place where the quantities should be taken out for contracts for new works to be carried out in Ireland. Since he had put his Notice of Motion on the Paper, that question had been very much simplified by the fact that a resident in Dubin had been appointed as Surveyor for the new barracks to be erected in Dublin. With regard to the quantities, the result of these being taken out in London was that it involved the bringing over of the gentleman who was elected by the contractors to act as surveyor, at considerable loss of time and at considerable inconvenience, to do the work in London which could be more satisfactorily performed on the other side. There was only one other case, as far as he could learn, of the quantities of a large work in Ireland for the War Department being taken out in London. In that case an Irish surveyor was elected by the contractors to measure the work in connection with the surveyor of the Royal Engineers. The latter gentleman worked, of course, only the limited number of office hours, and as the work had to be done jointly the Irish surveyor found that it was impossible for him to spend such a long time away from his home, and he accordingly found it better to pay another man in London to do the work, and went away himself. This system was, therefore, a practical exclusion of Irish surveyors, and it appeared to have been only once done before, the rule being to take out the quantities in the district where the work was to be done. He appealed to the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War to look into this matter. Then as to the second point of his Notice of Motion, which related to the use of materials for works under the War Department in Ireland, which were imported across the Channel, he had asked a Question on this subject of the Secretary of State for War the other day, and it was the unsatisfactory answer of the right hon. Gentleman which had induced him to put this Notice on the Paper. He had no doubt, however, that the right hon. Gentleman gave him a perfectly *bonâ fide* answer as far as he was himself concerned upon the information supplied to him. The right hon. Gentleman stated that the stone required for the very extensive works to be erected in Ireland must necessarily be brought from Yorkshire. He (Mr. Murphy) held in his hand a letter from one of the most eminent architects in the United Kingdom, to the effect that if the Secretary of State for War could see the kind of stone which came from the Mount Charles quarries, in Donegal, and which was being used for the Science and Art Buildings and National Library in Dublin, he would change his opinion with regard to that durable and useful stone; that he had used this stone in buildings in Dublin, and had no hesitation in giving the palm to it for durability, and that its introduction into England was simply a question of enterprize. As he gathered from the right hon. Gentleman's nodding assent that he would take this matter into favourable consideration, he would not further delay the Committee. He had now only to thank the Committee for their attention, and to submit these points to the consideration of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. BRODRICK) (Surrey, Guildford) said, he regretted the hon. Gentleman had not had an opportunity of bringing forward this subject earlier. He could assure the hon. Gentleman that there was no desire on the part of the Secretary of State for War either to drive contracts out of Ireland, or to use other than Irish material where it was possible to do so. The system of open competition had been adopted in the case of certain contracts, because the system of limited competition was expensive, although the work was well done, and because open competition was the rule at the War Office. With regard to the use of Red Mansfield stone, that stone was only made use of for ornamental dressing, which was a very small portion of the whole work, and the Secretary of State was quite willing to put into the specifications, "Best Mansfield stone, or stone of similar colour." If the hon. Gentleman was able to show that the stone from Donegal was on an equality with the Red Mansfield stone, the War Office would be unwilling to enforce the latter, and there would be no disinclination to meet the views of the hon. Gentleman as far as they could.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) said, he refrained from moving the Amendment standing in his name on what he understood to be the distinct statement of the First Lord of the Treasury, that the House would have another opportunity of discussing the subjects referred to in the Notices of Motions on the Paper.

Vote *agreed to*.

(2.) £4,977,000, Pay and Allowances.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL said, he hoped that he was correct in understanding that there was a distinct promise on the part of the Leader of the House, that another opportunity would be given for discussion?

MR. W. H. SMITH: There is a distinct understanding that, as has been the case on other occasions, an opportunity will be afforded for discussion.

Vote *agreed to.*

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again," put, and *agreed to.*

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow,* at Two of the clock.

Committee to sit again *To-morrow.*

TRAWLING (SCOTLAND) BILL.

(*Mr. Hunter, Mr. Macdonald, Mr. Cameron, Mr. Barclay, Mr. Esselemont.*)

[BILL 155.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) said, he did not mean to dispute that the Bill might be an exceedingly good one; but, at the same time, it always aroused suspicion in his mind when the Member in charge gave no explanation of the contents of a Bill. He thought it would only be reasonable to ask that some Member whose name was one the back of the Bill should give the House some slight indication of what the whole thing was about, so that hon. Members might judge how far they would be justified in allowing this stage to pass.

COLONEL MALCOLM (Argyllshire) said, this was a Bill that might be perfectly good on the East Coast of Scotland but it seemed to take rather a wide range when it proposed to prevent entirely the system of trawling within the three-mile limit all round the Coast of Scotland. That was simply the object of the Bill. He also observed that the Bill mentioned beam or other trawling. On the West Coast fishermen followed a system of trawling for herrings that was not beam trawling, and the Bill without some definition must lead to considerable confusion. For these reasons he objected to the Bill being read a second time without any explanation.

It being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed *To-morrow.*

OCCUPIERS' DISQUALIFICATION REMOVAL BILL.

(*Mr. Whitmore, Mr. Jeffreys, Mr. Hozier, Mr. Mowbray.*)

[BILL 110.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) said, he had no objection to the Bill, if its object were expressed in the title; but a word or two of explanation was desirable.

MR. WHITMORE (Chelsea) said, the object of the Bill was to remove a technical objection which disqualified occupiers who were obliged under some contract of service to temporarily leave their houses. This disqualification attached to many persons, soldiers, sailors, and others, by reason of their being obliged to break the continuous occupation of their premises. This disqualification was removed in the case of policemen by the Act of last Session, and he wished to extend the removal to others who might suffer from this merely technical disqualification. He proposed, by the Bill, that those persons who otherwise would have a vote should have it if absent not more than four months. He asked the House to allow the Bill to be read a second time, for he believed it was a perfectly reasonable measure, enabling those who were qualified in every other respect, but who were barred from voting by the technical disqualification of a compulsory absence. He assured hon. Members opposite it had no sort of sinister object; it simply removed a legal, a techncially legal, objection which at present affected many railway servants, domestic servants, clerks, and others.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) said, it was obvious that the Bill required some little discussion, and he must object to the second reading being taken at that time.

The Motion being opposed, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon *Monday* next.

MOTIONS.

GRANT OF SUPPLIES.

RESOLUTION.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) said, he was not aware whether there was any objection to the Motion he was about to make. It had met with the concurrence and approval of Her Majesty's Government, and he asked the House to accept the principle that a Select Committee should inquire into the procedure by which the House granted annual Supplies. The House would have observed that the Rule which he had set down with reference to improving the mode of procedure in this respect was not moved by himself, and he did not propose it, for the reason that there was a general feeling on both sides of the House that before any further alteration was made in reference to the procedure of Supply, a careful, full, and independent examination should be made into the system by a Select Committee. He, therefore, proposed his Resolution, and had no doubt the House would take care the Members of the Committee should be well qualified to consider the subject. There could be no doubt in the minds of hon. Members that a system deemed so valuable in reference to Army Estimates, might well be extended to the Navy and Civil Service for saving expenditure and promoting efficiency.

Motion made, and Question,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the procedure by which the House annually grants the Supplies to Her Majesty,"—(*Mr. Henry H. Fowler,*)

— put, and *agreed to.*

CORONERS' ELECTIONS BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That Leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the law relating to the election of Coroners."—(*Mr. Wootton Isaacson.*)

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked, did the Bill apply to Ireland?

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) said, he stated last Session, in answer to the hon. Member for the City of Cork, he was perfectly willing the Bill should extend to Ireland.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): I object to it.

The Motion being opposed, the Debate stood adjourned.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That Leave be given to introduce a Bill to amend the Law relating to the rating of Hereditaments containing Machinery."—(*Sir W. Houldsworth.*)

Sir WILLIAM HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.) said, perhaps he might be allowed to explain that this Bill did not extend to Ireland.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) objected.

The Motion being opposed, the Debate stood adjourned till *To-morrow.*

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACT (1886) AMENDMENT (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Dr. Clark, Bill to alter and amend the thirty-fourth section of "The Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886," *ordered* to be brought in by Dr. Clark, Colonel Malcolm, Mr. Mackintosh, Dr. M'Donald, Mr. Angus Sutherland, and Mr. Lyell.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 162.]

House adjourned at Ten Minutes after Twelve o'clock,

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 9th March, 1888.

MINUTES.] — Select Committee — Debates and Proceedings in Parliament, *appointed.*

Public Bills — *First Reading* — Statute Law Revision * (35).

Second Reading—Pluralities Acts Amendment Act, 1885, Amendment * (26).

Committee—Lunacy Acts Amendment (22).

Third Reading—County Courts Consolidation * (5), and *passed.*

HITCHIN FREE SCHOOL.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

Earl BEAUCHAMP, in rising to move—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty praying Her Majesty to withhold her assent from a scheme of the Charity Commissioners, laid before this House on February 20, relating to the Hitchin Free School,"

said, that their Lordships on more than one occasion had agreed to Addresses praying Her Majesty to withhold her consent from schemes of the Charity

Commissioners, and the scheme to which he was about to call their Lordships' attention equalled in objectionable matter if it did not exceed some of the schemes which had been withdrawn. It was a scheme for transforming an endowed free school at Hitchin into a grammar school for the middle classes, and he contended that in doing so the Charity Commissioners, if they were not exceeding their legal powers, were at least departing from the instructions given to them by Parliament. The powers of the Charity Commissioners in these matters were regulated by Acts of Parliament passed in 1869 and 1873, by which it was provided that in dealing with charities of this kind the Commissioners were to have due regard for the interests of the class of persons for the benefit of whom the charity was endowed. This school was founded in 1639, and received further subsequent endowments from other sources, and continued in that foundation until 1828. In the original endowment no limitation was made to the children of the poor; but to contemporary endowment given by friends of the founder, an express reservation was attached that the benefit of them should be given to the children of the poor. In 1828 the trustees appeared to have taken a very singular course. They made an order dismissing all the free boys from the school, and that no boy should be admitted on the foundation who was not the son of a respectable tradesman in Hitchin or in a similar rank of life. By this order the trustees admitted that up to that time the benefit of the school had been retained by the poor. There was no doubt that that action of the trustees was indefensible. If it were justifiable there would have been no necessity for him to address their Lordships. It might be said that the word "poor" was a word of art, and meant something more than was conveyed by the ordinary acceptation of the term, but no artificial meaning could be given to the word in this case, seeing that poor people in the ordinary acceptation of the term had enjoyed the benefits of this school from its foundation. If the endowments had been given subsequently to the action of the trustees in 1828, the action of the Charity Commissioners would be justified. It was sometimes said that the Act of 1870 rendered endowments of this kind unnecessary for the education of the poor, and that therefore they might be turned to any useful purpose that Parliament might approve; but the contention of those who were favourable to the passing of the Act of 1870 was that their object was not in any way to supplant, but to supplement, the educational system. Again, it might be said, and said with truth, that Hitchin was sufficiently provided with schools for the children of the poor, seeing that there were voluntary schools for no less than 1,900 children, and that the average attendance was 1,229. This scheme was decidedly unpopular. In May, 1885, a public meeting was held, at which it was proposed by one of the trustees, and carried unanimously, that the trustees should be requested to re-open the free school as soon as practicable, and that the course of instruction should be arranged to suit the requirements of the times. Was this scheme suited to the requirements of the times? He thought that if their Lordships would look carefully into it they would come to the conclusion that it was not. By section 40 of the scheme the endowment was to be converted into an institution where boys were to be boarded whose parents could pay £45 a-year for board, together with fees of from £6 to £12 a-year for tuition. Could it be contended that such fees could be within the reach of the poor? The curriculum might mean anything or nothing, but it appeared to be quite unsuited to the education of the children of the poor. He was not disposed to deny to the children of any class the fullest access to a higher education, and he should be glad to see some scheme by which clever boys could gradually rise from one school to another, and if they distinguished themselves, could go to a University and enter the learned professions. But he did think it extremely inadvisable to give to the children of the poor generally an education which was wholly unsuited to assist them in their after life. It would not help them in the least to gain their own livelihood; but would merely add to the number of boys whose highest ambition it was to become clerks instead of devoting themselves to more useful occupations. Hitherto too much attention had been paid to the literary branch of education instead of to that training which would fit boys for their subsequent trades and pursuits. One-half of this endowment was to go for the benefit of girls; but there was already in Hitchin a considerable foundation for the benefit of girls. This scheme really made no provision for the poor, save by the creation of a few scholarships and the provision of a few free admissions to the grammar school. It was, however, an exceedingly costly scheme; and for the purpose of making up the necessary funds it was intended to obtain assistance from the charity known as that of John Rand. The evidence taken before the Commission on Elementary Education emphasized two points — namely, the great want of evening schools and of education in handicraft and agricultural industry. Such education would be of immense value to the children of the poor in after life. The object of the founder of John Rand's charity was that boys and girls should be fitted out for trade and service. Why not respect that object, and provide a school for technical education; or why not establish continuation schools, where the knowledge acquired in the elementary schools might be developed? The art of agriculture, including all matters appertaining to the dairy, might be taught with much advantage; and it was worth noting that there were premises ready to hand, the trustees of the Hitchin charity having kept their buildings in repair. He might be told that it was now too late to interfere with the proposed scheme, others of a similar nature having already been adopted. He admitted that it was possible that some objectionable schemes had been overlooked by their Lordships; but the fact that in the past they had neglected to examine schemes as rigorously as they ought surely afforded no excuse for fresh negligence. He therefore asked their Lordships to send the scheme back, and ask the Commissioners to provide another and more suitable to the wants of the children of Hitchin, and more in accordance with the wishes of the founder. He concluded by moving the Resolution which stood in his name.

Moved, "That an humble address be presented to Her Majesty praying Her Majesty to withhold her assent from a scheme of the Charity Commissioners laid before this House on 20th February relating to the Hitchin Free School."—(*The Earl Beauchamp.*)

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Viscount CRANBROOK) said, that his noble Friend had stated much which he did not dispute, but omitted much which was material to the issue, and as to the education to be given he had omitted to state that the governors under the scheme, to whom much was left to be done, would be able to do what the locality might require. The noble Earl was opposed apparently to the whole system recommended by the Endowed School Commissioners and the Charity Commissioners, and approved by the Committee of the House of Commons, which made an exhaustive inquiry and reported last year. He might quote largely from that report, but it expressed the opinion that the mode adopted by the Charity Commissioners for giving to the poor through scholarships and exhibitions a higher education than they could otherwise attain was beneficial to the poor. At Hitchin there were admirable elementary schools which had been rivals of the school to which the noble Earl had drawn attention, and so severely did that school suffer from the competition that it did not fulfil its object, pupils failed, and in 1876 it was found necessary to close it. The school was originally founded for the use of the children of the people of Hitchin, not one word being said as to its being a foundation for the poor. Indeed, the character of the education prescribed was not at all adapted to the poor. The terms used implied a Grammar School. Subsequent benefactors, it was true, had said that poor children were to have the benefit of their endowments; but such stipulations could not alter the nature of the original foundation. The school did not prosper; in 1828 a great change was made in connection with it, not a proper one in itself, but under that scheme scholars dwindled away, and at one time there were only seven, at another 13, and in 1876 it was finally closed, the schoolmaster being pensioned off. Something had been said as to the excellence of the buildings; but there was only one small school room without a separate class-room, and the master's house had been reported upon by the Inspector as wholly unfit for its purpose. It might be supposed that the people of Hitchin were in a state of alarm at the prospect of the scheme coming into operation, whereas they had subscribed

£3,000 in order to start the proposed school on the foundation. He was glad they were relieved of the religious question in this controversy, but still it was behind much of the opposition to the schemes. In Holwell there were only 187 persons, and the arrangements proposed by the schemes had the approval of the Governors of the Charity, as was shown by a letter approving all but the religious portion of the scheme which could not be changed. Measures could be taken under the scheme to promote technical education if that course was found to be desirable. As to the education of girls, one foundation was for "children," which would mean both boys and girls, and in the other both were mentioned. Elementary education was amply provided for; and as these schemes supplied other requirements in a manner agreeable to the population, he hoped their Lordships would not support the Motion.

The Marquess of RIPON said, that he had been asked to present a Petition from the inhabitants of Hitchin in favour of the scheme. Hitchin was a town with a population of 9,000, and, therefore, it had a claim to be provided with good secondary education. The foundation was not a large one — not enough to establish an efficient grammar school, and, therefore, money had been subscribed to carry out the proposed scheme, but might not be forthcoming for any other plan. Trinity College, Cambridge, which was the patron of the living, had subscribed £300. According to his experience in similar cases, scholarships such as were proposed in this scheme formed a valuable link between the elementary and secondary schools and were of great valve to the working classes.

On Question, *resolved* in the *negative.*

LUNACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

(NO. 22.) COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order).

Clauses 1 to 19 inclusive, *agreed to.*

Clause 20 (Lunatics in workhouses. 43 & 49 *Vict.* c. 52. Form 10).

Lord DORMER, in moving an Amendment for the purpose of compelling the workhouse authorities to provide sufficient and proper accommodation for pauper lunatics, said, the borough and county asylums in England and Wales were practically full, and as the number of lunatics was increasing at the average rate of 1,800 per year, it was proposed to send harmless cases which were now in the asylums to the workhouses, and his object in moving the Amendment was to save the inhabitants of the workhouses the discomfort and degradation of having to live in association with lunatics.

Amendment *moved*, in page 12, line 26, leave out from ("lunatics,") to the end of Sub-section (*c*). — (*The Lord Dormer.*)

The LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord Halsbury) said, he thought the Amendment was unnecessary, and therefore opposed it.

Amendment *negatived.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clauses 21 to 33 inclusive, *agreed to.*

On the Motion of The Lord Herschell, the following Clause was *agreed to*, and *inserted* after Clause 33:—

"33A. The notice by section nineteen of the Lunacy Act, 1853, required to be sent upon the recovery of a patient, shall state that unless the patient is removed within seven days from the date of the notice he will be discharged. If the patient is not removed within seven days from the date of the notice he shall be forthwith discharged without further order."

Clauses 34 to 57, inclusive, *agreed to.*

Clause 58 (Power to enlarge asylums in order to provide accommodation for private patients).

Lord DORMER moved an Amendment with the object of giving to the Local Authority power to build a hospital or asylum for private patients, and restricting the powers of enlarging, granted by this clause, to those asylums which have not accommodation for more than 400 patients.

Amendment *moved*,

In page 35, line 2, after ("Secretary of State") insert ("may erect an asylum or hospital for private patients, or if the county or borough asylum does not contain accommodation for more than four hundred patients"); and in line 6, after ("all") insert ("new buildings or.")—(*The Lord Dormer.*)

LORD HALSBURY said, he could not accept the Amendment.

Amendment *negatived.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Remaining Clauses and Schedules *agreed to.*

The Report of the Amendments to be received on *Tuesday* next.

VIVISECTION.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH, in moving—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for Correspondence between the Home Office and the Society for the Protection of Animals from Vivisection in reference to two recent instances of infringements of the law,"

asked, Whether it would in future be a portion of the duties of the authorities at the Home Office to cause legal proceedings to be instituted in similar cases? He had brought these cases before the House a few days ago, when the noble Lord who represented the Home Office was, unfortunately, not in his place. In one case the operation was performed on a rabbit, but without anæsthetics; and in the other case a number of animals were inoculated in the presence of a number of persons, and without anæsthetics. The law had been distinctly contravened; but upon the attention of the Home Secretary being drawn to the cases, he replied, in the one case, that the licence would be withdrawn, and in the other that so long a time had elapsed since the infringement of the law that he did not feel justified in instituting proceedings. Under these circumstances he desired to know, whether in future, in cases brought to the attention of the Home Office, it would be deemed its duty to institute proceedings.

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for Correspondence between the Home Office and the Society for the Protection of Animals from Vivisection in reference to two recent instances of infringements of the law."—(*The Viscount Sidmouth.*)

EARL BROWNLOW said, it certainly was a portion of the duties of the authorities at the Home Office to cause proceedings to be instituted in cases where the Vivisection Act had been infringed, and that duty had in the past been carefully discharged. This matter was brought before the House a short time ago by the noble Viscount, when he himself was not in his place, and the Prime Minister then pointed out that no answer could be given as the Home Office did not know to what cases the noble Viscount referred. Since then the noble Viscount had privately informed him upon this point; and it appeared that the cases to which he referred were those of Dr. Hine and Professor Pemberley. Dr. Hine had a certificate, but clearly exceeded the powers granted by the certificate; and the Home Secretary, on having his attention called to the matter, withdrew the licence. Mr. Pemberley had not a certificate, and his explanation was that he was acting as the assistant of Dr. Robertson, who had. However, the infringement of the law was not discovered until the time of limitation had passed. There were extenuating circumstances in both cases. Cases could be dealt with by the Home Office according to their circumstances, and it was not necessary on every occasion to take legal proceedings. The Government had no objection to lay the Correspondence asked for upon the Table.

Motion *agreed to.*

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL [H.L.]

A Bill for further promoting the revision of the Statute Law by repealing superfluous expresssions of enactment, and enactments which have ceased to be in force or have become unnecessarry—Was *presented* by The Lord Chancellor; read 1ª. (No. 35.)

SWEATING SYSTEM.

Select Committee on; The Lords following were named of the Committee:—

L. Abp. Canterbury.
E. Derby.
E. Onslow.
V. Gordon, (*E. Aberdeen*).
L. Clinton.
L. Clifford of Chudleigh.
L. Foxford, (*E. Limerick*).
L. Wigan, (*E. Crawford and Balcarres*).
L. Kenry, (*E. Dunraven and Mount-Earl*).
L. Sandhurst.
L. Rothschild.
L. Monkswell.
L. Thring.

The Committee to appoint their own Chairman.

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT.

Message of the House of Commons of Yesterday on the subject of the publication of Debates and Proceedings in Parliament, *considered* (according to order).

Then it was *moved,* "That a Committee be appointed, to consist of Six Lords, to join with the Committee of the House of Commons as mentioned in the said Message, to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament."—(*The Marquess of Salisbury.*)

The same was *agreed to.*

A message sent to the Commons in answer to their message of Yesterday to inform them that this House has appointed a Committee to consist of Six Lords to join with the Committee of the Commons.

House adjourned at a quarter past Six o'clock, till Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 9th March, 1888.

The House met at Two of the clock.

MINUTES.] — New Writ Issued — *For* Merthyr Tydvil, *v.* Charles Herbert James, esquire, Manor of Northstead.

Supply—*considered in Committee* — *Resolutions* [March 8] *reported.*

Public Bills — *Resolutions in Committee* — National Debt Acts; Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland [Salary, &c.]—r.p.

Ordered—First Reading—Rating of Machinery* [163.]

Second Reading—East India (Purchase and Construction of Railways) * [143].

QUESTIONS.

PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—BALLYCOTTON PIER.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Ballycotton Pier is about being handed over by the Board of Works, as completed, to the Grand Jury of County Cork; whether the portion of the old pier which has been so often complained of, and which it was promised should be removed, has not been touched, and still remains a source of impediment and danger to all fishing vessels entering the harbour; whether the rubble, which it was stipulated should be dredged, has been removed; what were the original specifications contracted for; and, whether the Board of Works are satisfied with the execution of the work? The hon. Gentleman also asked, Whether a competent engineer will be sent down to inspect the Ballycotton Pier; whether a request to that effect having been made by the local Catholic clergyman, the Rev. M. P. Norris, at the request of the Ballycotton fishermen, to the Board of Works, an answer was given, saying that Mr. Keating would be sent down to inspect the work; whether Father Norris called attention to the fact that Mr. Keating was the engineer under whose superintendence the work was carried out, and, having regard to the unsatisfactory result, requested that an independent engineer might be sent, and whether the Board refused to accede to the request; whether it is a fact that five boats have already been aground on the rubble which has accumulated in the course of construction of the pier; and, whether, in consequence of the said accumulation, where there was formerly a sandy bottom next the pier, with from four to 10 feet of water, there is at present only from one to five?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.) (who replied) said: The Ballycotton Pier has been handed over to the Grand Jury for maintenance in the usual way. I am informed that the remains of the old pier have been removed to the full depth recommended by the Fishery Commissioners, and that almost all the rubble has been removed, and the rest will be so. The original specifications contracted for were the building of a pier and breakwater, with a beacon, and the removal, if required, of a part of the old pier. The Board of Works are satisfied with the execution of the works; but, in accordance with the request of Father Norris, the chief engineer of the Board will visit the place shortly, and will observe the exact state of the works. The Board have no information of any boats grounding; and as regards the depth along the pier, they state that for 245 feet out of 285 feet the depth at low water ordinary spring tides varies from four feet to 12 feet.

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND)—MUSSEL BEDS IN TIDAL WATERS.

Mr. ANDERSON (Elgin and Nairn) asked the Lord Advocate, What inquiries have been made by the Scotch Fishery Board as to the existence and extent of private rights in mussel beds in the tidal waters of Scotland; what inquiries have been made as to the nature of such rights; what conclusions have been come to by the Fishery Board as to the best way of dealing with the mussel beds, and of enabling fishermen to obtain bait at reasonable rates; and, what course does the Government intend to take this Session on the subject?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): In answer to the first and second Questions of the hon. Member, no inquiries have been made since the presentation to Parliament of the Report on this subject last Session. The Fishery Board have come to no such conclusions as are indicated in the third Question put by the hon. Member; but, as mentioned in their last Annual Report, they have issued Regulations for the guidance of persons wishing to cultivate oyster and mussel beds, and are affording them every assistance and encouragement. The Government are fully aware of the importance of this subject, and of the difficulties which surround it; but are not, as at present advised, prepared to take any immediate action in the matter.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—"MR. BALFOUR AND THE RESIDENT MAGISTRATES."

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been directed to a letter of Mr. W. T. Dennehy, which appeared in *The Dublin Evening Telegraph* of 3rd March, 1888, entitled "Mr. Balfour and the Resident Magistrates," and to which the writer appends four extracts from *The Irish Times*, dated respectively 16th September, 1887, 17th September, 1887, 19th October, 1887, and 22nd October, 1887, each giving accounts of interviews and consultations between the Chief Secretary and Irish Magistrates, and the last-mentioned extract stating that

> "Colonel Turner, Captain Walsh, Resident Magistrate, and Mr. Cecil Roche, Resident Magistrate, who have been in attendance on the Chief Secretary for the past two days at the Castle, have returned to their districts;"

whether any Minutes of these attendances of the Irish magistrates on the Chief Secretary have been preserved; and, if so, whether he would have any objection to lay them upon the Table of the House; and, whether he adheres to his statement, that the Irish magistrates receive no orders from Dublin Castle, and act independently between the subject and the Crown?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I must adhere to what I have before said in answer to the hon. Gentleman—namely, that I do not feel called upon to give any account to the hon. Member of the interviews which in Dublin or elsewhere I may think it necessary to hold in the discharge of my duties as Chief Secretary. But I may inform him that I am always glad, so far as possible, to see any persons, magistrates or others, who are qualified to give me an accurate account of the state of the district in which they reside. If by his last paragraph he desires to imply that magistrates receive from me, directly or indirectly, communications respecting matters in which they have to act in a judicial capacity, I can only regret that he should have permitted himself to make such an imputation upon an honourable and upright body of men.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): As a matter of fact and history, will the right hon. Gentleman say whether these interviews took place or not?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I decline to add anything to what I have already said.

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (IRELAND) BILL—COUNCIL OF LAW REPORTING.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland, What annual saving would be effected by the Government Judicature Bill; is he aware of the strong feeling that exists as to the present defective state of legal reporting in Ireland; and, would there be any difficulty, out of the proposed saving, in finding funds to provide for some record of important Judgments, so that no case of great public professional interest should be omitted from the Law Reports, or have its report indefinitely delayed?

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN) (Dublin University): The question of law reporting in Ireland is one in which I have taken a practical interest for many years. I am fully conscious of the fact that the funds at the disposal of the Council of Law Reporting did not enable us to maintain the Reports in the state of efficiency which we desired. Complaints, no doubt, have been made; but I do not think that they assumed the dimensions suggested by the Question. I am happy to state that the funds of the Council are now in a more prosperous condition; and I believe that it will be found that few, if any, cases of importance are now omitted from the Reports. The ultimate annual saving proposed to be effected by the Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) Bill is estimated at over £11,000. There will, however, be no immediate saving; and I fear that there would be difficulty in giving practical effect to the suggestion of the hon. and learned Member. I should be exceedingly glad if a way were found.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—COURT OF THE RECORDER OF DUBLIN.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland, Has his attention been called to a letter, written by the Right honourable the Recorder of Dublin to the papers, pressing for the necessity of some amendment in the law as to levying executions in his Court and the Court of Conscience, and pointing out the hardship to the poor of the present method of levying judgments for small debts, and will anything be done by Government to apply a legislative remedy to grievances thus judicially called attention to?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Madden) (Dublin University): My attention has been called to the letter referred to written by the learned Recorder of Dublin. I observe that a Bill has been introduced this Session dealing with the subject of executions for small debts. As soon as the Bill has been circulated, the Government will carefully consider its provisions in connection with the entire question.

METROPOLITAN POLICE—PENSION TO POLICE CONSTABLE 285 L.

Mr. GENT-DAVIS (Lambeth, Kennington) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether Police Constable 285 L, who was injured whilst on duty, on the day of Her Majesty's Jubilee, in such a way as to have rendered him unfit for further service, would have been entitled, after having served for a period of 16 years and three months, to a yearly pension of £24 19*s.* 3*d.* if his case had been one of ordinary sickness; whether a Board of Superintendents sat to inquire into the case, and recommended, after a careful inquiry, that he should receive a yearly pension of £40 11*s.* 3*d.* under Paragraph 3 of the General Police Orders of 26th December, 1873, which says—

> "Injuries received in the execution of duty partially incapacitating after 15 years 25·50ths of salary;"

whether such recommendation was ignored, after being endorsed by the Commissioners, and a pension of only £24 19*s.* 3*d.* granted; and, whether he will re-consider the decision in the case, having regard to the special occasion on which the injuries were received, and to the fact that Her Majesty was graciously pleased to express Her thanks to the Metropolitan Police for their services on the day in question?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): The ordinary pension to which he would have been entitled is correctly stated. The constable was injured while on duty on Jubilee Day. But the injury was an accidental one, and arose from a horse treading on his foot, the great toe of which was already permanently enlarged by gout. It is the case that the recommendation of the Board of Superintendents on the case was not adopted; but the Board ignored the distinction between accidental injuries and not accidental injuries, and thus erroneously applied to the constable a Rule not applicable to his case. I was unable, therefore, to adopt the recommendation, though endorsed by the Commissioners. I awarded to the constable the pension mentioned, which, though coinciding with the ordinary pension, was the highest pension that could lawfully be awarded under the Rules of the Force. I must decline to re-consider the decision.

Mr. GENT-DAVIS asked whether, the accident having taken place on an exceptional occasion, some other consideration ought not to have been given to the case?

Mr. MATTHEWS said, that the question of superannuation allowance was governed by Rules from which he was not able to depart.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—EASTER VOLUNTEER REVIEW AT ALDERSHOT.

Mr. ISAACS (Newington, Walworth) asked the Secretary of State for War, If it is a fact that Volunteer officers accompanying their regiments to Aldershot at Easter have been refused officers' quarters there; and, if so, whether the necesary orders will be issued to prevent those officers having to find quarters in the town, at a considerable distance from their regimental parades?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): There is every desire to accommodate the Volunteers at Easter, both at Aldershot and in other districts; but it is not possible to allot to them officers' quarters unless there are quarters vacant. None which are available have been refused to them.

TECHNICAL SCHOOLS (SCOTLAND) ACT—MEMORANDUM OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan) (for Sir Richard Paget) (Somerset, Wells), asked the Lord Advocate, If he will be good enough to lay upon the Table of the House a copy of a recent Memorandum, by the Secretary to the Scotch Education Department, with reference to the Scotch Technical Education Act of last Session?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The Memorandum was laid on the Table on Tuesday last.

Mr. F. S. POWELL: Will it soon be printed?

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD: It is printed.

SCOTLAND—DISTURBANCES IN LEWIS—TRIAL OF THE PRISONERS.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Lord Advocate, If he will inform the House of the amount of expense incurred in bringing to Edinburgh for trial the four Lewis crofters declared not guilty of the charges against them in the Court of Justiciary on Monday last; whether any assistance was given by the Crown to enable the prisoners to bring up witnesses for the defence; and, what sum has been paid them to defray the cost of their journey home?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The expenses of the four Lewis crofters referred to were allowed coming to Edinburgh and returning home, and the expenses of the witnesses for the defence were also allowed. If the hon. Member wishes to know the amount, I will tell him privately; but it is not desirable to state it publicly.

Dr. CAMERON asked a further Question with respect to the truth of a newspaper paragraph to the effect that one of the Crown witnesses, who had been brought to Edinburgh, had gone out of his mind in consequence of having been plied with drink by the person in charge of him?

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD: I have no information upon the matter, except what I saw in a paragraph in the newspapers; but I will inquire.

ANNUAL FINANCE ACCOUNTS—PENSIONS FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether it is the fact that, in the case of pensions and other items entered in the Annual Finance Accounts and charged on the Consolidated Fund, no account is published showing whether or not any particular pension or other item has actually been paid from the Consolidated Fund; whether it is the fact that the unexpended balance is stated in one sum without specifying the items of such balance, making it difficult to ascertain whether any particular pension has or has not been paid; and, whether he proposes to alter the existing system, with a view to affording public proof that the moneys charged upon the Consolidated Fund for a particular object are actually expended upon that object?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): It is true that the Finance Accounts, as published, do not show whether any particular pension or other item charged on the Consolidated Fund has actually been paid. The unexpended balance is stated in one sum in the Comptroller and Auditor General's Report on the abstract account of the Consolidated Fund. I think it would be desirable to give details of the items which make up the amount surrendered to the Exchequer in respect of over issues from the Consolidatod Fund; and will see if it is possible to do this in the next issue of the Finance Accounts.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL (ENGLAND AND WALES)—THE METROPOLIS.

MR. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether the Local Government Bill will in any way affect the Metropolis; and, if so, how?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I am afraid I must ask my hon. Friend to allow me to answer the Question when I introduce the Bill.

BURGH POLICE AND HEALTH (SCOTLAND) BILL.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) (for Mr. J. W. BARCLAY) (Forfarshire) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether the Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) Bill is applicable to all burghs of 4,000 population?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): My hon. Friend will find the particulars of the application of the Bill to burghs in Scotland in Schedule 5, and in Schedule 2 the burghs as to which existing local Police Acts or parts of them are saved by the Bill.

LOTTERIES—THE GLADSTONE RADICAL CLUB.

MR. KELLY (Camberwell, N.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to an announcement that a number of prizes will be drawn for on the 27th of March, at the Gladstone Radical Club, Baroness Road, Hackney Road, and that all persons purchasing tickets for two concerts to be given there for the benefit of Mr. W. C. Kilbey, the Vice President, will have the right to draw for such prizes; whether this distribution of prizes is illegal; and, if so, whether he will take steps to prevent it; and, whether, having regard to the fact that three of the prizes consist of a box of cigars, half-a-dozen cigars, and a packet of cigars respectively, he will cause inquiries to be made as to whether the persons responsible for the conduct of the Gladstone Radical Club are in the habit of selling cigars to persons not being members thereof, without having taken out any licence for the purpose?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; my attention has been called to this matter, and I have brought the announcement of the proposed lottery to the notice of the Public Prosecutor. With regard to the last paragraph of the Question, I have called the attention of the Board of Inland Revenue to the matter.

POST OFFICE—BRITISH AND FOREIGN POSTAGE RATES FROM SHANGHAI.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Postmaster General, How the German and French Post Offices can carry letters from Shanghai to London for 2½*d.*, while it does not pay the British Post Office to do so for less than 5*d.*; has he inquired what proportion the British trade bears to the French and German trade with Shanghai; would it be possible to get a Return of the cost of the maintenance of each Post Office, and the amount paid in postage at Shanghai at the British, the French, and the German Post Offices; and, if not, can he give the amount received for stamps at the English Post Office at Shanghai, and the salary paid to the staff there?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University), in reply, said, he had fully answered this Question some time ago. The French and German Post Offices had the option of levying, or not levying, additional postage on sea-borne letters. He did not see what useful purpose would be served by inquiring as to the latter part of the Question.

THE NATIONAL DEBT—CONVERSION OF THE THREE PER CENTS.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether the option to exchange the existing Three Per Cents for an equivalent amount of Local Loans Stock was open to all fundholders; and, if not, to whom was such option given?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square), in reply, said, that he proposed, either when he made his Financial Statement, or on another opportunity, to explain fully the manner in which the Local Loans Stock had been dealt with.

IRELAND—DESTITUTION IN TH ARRAN ISLANDS.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to a letter in *The Freeman's Journal* of the 8th of March from the Rev. M. O'Donohue, parish priest, with respect to the great destitution in the Arran Isles; and, what steps are the Government taking with a view of relieving the exceptional distress there?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (*Manchester, E.*): I know nothing about the letter to which the hon. Member refers; but I have taken care to make myself acquainted with the condition of the Arran Islands. The duty of relieving destitution rests with the Local Authorities, and not with the Government; nor should it be undertaken under any circumstances by the Government, except with the greatest caution. I propose, however, to supply, under careful supervision, seed potatoes to those who really require it in the Islands; and as this, if done at all, must be done without delay, I have ventured, with the sanction of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to anticipate the approval of Parliament. I trust that the course will not be of ultimate injury to the Islanders; although anyone who studies the history of destitution in the West of Ireland may well doubt whether the charity, public or private, by which it has been sought to relieve it, has produced, on the whole, a balance of good or of evil.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked, if the Chief Secretary would inform the House, when applying for this money, as to how many thousands of pounds in rent those people on the Arran Islands had paid within the last five years?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said, he had not as yet consulted with his right hon. Friend as to the exact form in which Parliament would be asked for this grant. He did not think the information required was necessary.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked, if the right hon. Gentleman would apply the same principle to the destitution of the people of the Western Hebrides? Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would consult with the Lord Advocate upon the point.

[No reply.]

SALE OF LIQUORS ON SUNDAY (IRELAND) BILL.

In reply to Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.),

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.) said, the nomination of the Select Committee on this subject had been postponed at the request of hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite. He had not consulted those hon. Gentlemen as to when it would be convenient to nominate the Committee; but he hoped to do so in a few days.

THE DEATH OF THE EMPEROR OF GERMANY.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I think it right, Sir, to inform the House that Her Majesty's Government have received a despatch from Her Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin, announcing the death of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Germany. I make this announcement, Sir, to the House, feeling that it is one which deeply interests this House; and I am sure, Sir, the House and the country will join in the sorrow which has afflicted the whole people of Germany—our allies and our friends.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): In the absence, Sir, of my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian, I have only to express the entire concurrence of this side of the House in the sentiments expressed by the right hon. Gentleman.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

NATIONAL DEBT ACTS.

COMMITTEE.

Considered in the Committee.

(In the Committee.)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): Mr. Courtney, I can assure this Committee that it is no common expression of Parliamentary tradition when I say I rise to submit certain

Resolutions under a grave sense of responsibility. Whether we look at the magnitude of the interests involved or the effect upon the credit of the country of the failure or success of any attempts to deal with the National Debt—everyone who makes proposals with regard to the Debt must feel that he must make out a strong case for the action he proposes to take before he is justified in disturbing the markets or credit of the country. I feel sure that I shall be able in the present case to prove that Her Majesty's Government have scarcely any option, but that they are compelled to take the course I am about to take. I believe that the measures we propose, if we are successful in passing them through this House, will tend materially to lighten the burdens of the country, to raise its credit, and to increase its resources. By a strange historical coincidence, if it had been possible to make this Motion yesterday, it would have been the exact day—namely, the 8th of March—when Mr. Goulburn, the Chancellor of the Exchequer under Sir Robert Peel, proposed a large and most successful scheme of conversion 44 years ago. He proposed that conversion on the 8th of March, and on the 22nd of March his proposals received the final assent of the Legislature. I presume there is no one in this House, except the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), who was at the time a Member of Sir Robert Peel's Government, who has a personal recollection of that great measure. Any hon. Member who wishes to master these matters should not fail to read the speech which Mr. Goulburn made on that occasion. If I did no more than repeat the speech almost *verbatim* to this House, I should make out the case for the course I propose to ask the Committee to follow. Mr. Goulburn rested the expediency of conversion upon the following four considerations—(1) the general expectation of the country; (2) the amount of capital seeking investment and the general fall in the rate of interest; (3) the strong position of the Revenue; and (4) the manageable proportions of the Floating Debt. If I could follow his reasoning through every one of these motives, I should prove to the Committee that if the motives for a large measure of conversion existed then, they are equally strong, if not stronger, at the present moment. I have said that Mr. Goulburn rested his proposals, in the first place, on the general expectations of the people. I do not know, and I have no means of ascertaining, how far the general expectations of the public now correspond to the expectations entertained in 1844, but I may look to the facts to see how far general expectations have been translated into the operations of the market. If I may say it, no one can have observed the general tone of public opinion without noticing that there is a universal feeling that the time for a scheme of conversion, and a bold scheme of conversion, has arrived. There is no better test of general expectation with regard to a scheme of conversion than the contrast which may be presented in the prices of Stock equal in security, but different as regards the terms under which they are redeemable. Take Stocks of equal value. It will always be found that in proportion as such Stocks stand in danger of being redeemed at par they enjoy a lower rate of interest. If you contrast at any time the value of the Stocks which are redeemable with those that are not redeemable, you will find a certain test of the expectation of the public with regard to the conversion of the former class of securities. Now, in Mr. Goulburn's time the irredeemable Consols had risen from 91½ in 1836 to 98½ on the 8th of March, 1844. At the same time Three-and-a-Halfs, which were redeemable, had risen only from 99 to 101⅜. Precisely the same contrast, only more marked, is observable to-day between the great rise in irredeemable and the comparatively small rise in redeemable Stocks. In 1880 Two-and-a-Half per Cents stood at 80, and in 1888 (8th of March) they stood at 96, a rise of 16 per cent. Consols in 1880 stood at 97⅝, and rose to 102 in 1888, a rise of only 4⅜ per cent. Thus irredeemable Stock has risen 16 per cent, while the other has risen no more than 4⅜ per cent. The second ground upon which Mr. Goulburn relied was the large amount of capital seeking investment and the high price of sound securities. When I look around me now, I would invite hon. Members to consider if we are not also in a position to say that there is an immense amount of capital seeking investment, and that the price of sound securities has risen to an extreme extent. Other sound securities have been passing Government securities in the race, because Government securities have ever hanging over them the fear that they may be converted at any moment, while other securities enjoy an immunity from this danger. And the country has been in this position—that we have neither been able to gain the advantage of a reduction in the rate of interest, nor, on the other hand, have we been able to enjoy the benefit of a rise in the price of Consols because of the fear of conversion—a fear which has continued from year to year without coming to anything, to the detriment of the taxpayers of the country. If the opportunities for investment are more numerous now than they were in Mr. Goulburn's time, at the same time the amount of capital seeking investment is also far vaster at the present day. I call the attention of the Committee to some figures which will give evidence—conclusive evidence—of the rise in the price of the best Stocks. I will take 10 years. Metropolitan Three and a-Half per Cent Debenture Stock stood in March, 1879, at 102; in March, 1888, it stands at 112—a rise of 10 per cent. Great Western Four per Cent Debentures in the same period has risen from 105 to 129, or 24 per cent; North-Western Four per Cent Debentures have risen from 107 to 130, or 23 per cent; Midland from 105 to 129, or 24 per cent. It will be seen that the debentures of these three great Railway Companies have risen in 10 years 24, 23, and 24 per cent respectively, showing a greater demand for safe investments. What during that time has been the fate of Consols, which represent the credit of the country? They have risen from 96⅜ to 102⅜—only 6 per cent. The country, therefore, has not had an equal advantage from the increase of capital seeking investment, and the general reduction of interest which has taken place. What was the third point on which Mr. Goulburn insisted? He pointed to the low rate of interest on the Floating Debt. Mr. Goulburn's case was extremely strong when he spoke. Exchequer Bills were giving to the holders only £2 4*s.* 0*d.* per cent. I am now able to borrow for the nation on Treasury Bills for six months at the rate of £1 12*s.* 7*d.* per annum—an extremely low rate of interest. With regard, then, to the Floating Debt, if in Mr. Goulburn's time he thought it manageable, it is still more manageable now. We have to deal with even more favourable conditions at the present time, and also with more manageable amounts. In his time the Floating Debt, represented by Exchequer Bills, stood at £18,500,000. Our Floating Debt, represented by Exchequer and Treasury Bills, is under £14,000,000 at the present moment. So we stand in a better position than did Sir Robert Peel's Government in 1844. Mr. Goulburn spoke, further, of the position of the Revenue at that time, pointing out how it had increased and showed a more satisfactory condition than had existed for some years before. Again, I am able to say, though I will certainly not anticipate any declarations which it may be my duty to make when I have the honour to propose the Budget, that there is every evidence that our Revenue certainly stands, relatively to our Expenditure, in as good if not a better position than when Mr. Goulburn proposed his successful conversion, and with regard to the balances at our command they will, I trust, prove extremely strong. Every indication I have at present shows that the balances with which we shall be able to face any financial operation which may be necessary will be such as will be creditable to the resources of the country, and form a firm foundation for carrying out the proposals which I shall have the honour to submit. In one respect I will admit that I am not so favourably situated now as was the Government of Sir Robert Peel in 1844. No doubt there is not now the same serenity in the political atmosphere of the foreign world; there is not the same confidence in the continued absence of disturbing causes. But, on the other hand, I think that if in these days we were to wait until causes of apprehension were entirely removed, until universal disarmament had lulled us into an absolute sense of confidence in prolonged and certain peace, it would be long before any Government could try to lighten the burden which the interest of the Debt imposes on this country. I am weighing every word I say. I have no fear that the success of my plan will be compromised by any foreign complications; and I believe the Government ought to feel less anxiety on this score at the present moment than might have been the case a month or two ago. And now, Sir, having explained the conditions which I believe to be favourable to conversion, I feel relieved, as Mr. Goulburn felt relieved, from dwelling upon the duty of the Government to deal with the matter if the conditions are favourable. We cannot be content to see the credit of the country, as expressed in the price of its securities, kept down by that fear of conversion to which I have alluded. Surely, we ought to endeavour to see whether we cannot remove this incubus on the credit of the country and let our Stocks rise in the same manner in which the Stocks of other countries have risen. It will be seen—and I can quote figures to that effect—that while Consols, the historical Stock of this country, the champion Stock of the world, if I may use the phrase, used to have a proud pre-eminence over all other Stocks, they have been severely pressed in competition by the Stocks of other countries, from the fact that the latter were not in the position in which we have been—namely, hampered by enormous difficulties in dealing with their Stocks. We have seen that these Stocks have risen in an infinitely greater proportion than the Stocks of the richest country in the world, whose credit ought certainly to progress proportionately to that of any other country. Here are some figures as regards other States. An investor in the Stocks of the United States—which is, I, however, frankly admit, an entirely abnormal case—in 1867, 20 years ago, used to receive £8 12*s.* 8*d.* interest on his capital. In 1887 he received £3 1*s.* 6*d.* Now I take the case of an investor in the Stocks of steady-going, peaceful, and consistently solvent States. Twenty years ago, an investor in Dutch Stock received £4 11*s.* per cent for his money; in 1887 he received £3 8*s.*, a fall in interest of £1 3*s.* An investor in Swedish Stock received 20 years ago £5 3*s.* He now receives £3 17*s.*, a difference of £1 6*s.* An investor in Consols, on the other hand, received 20 years ago £3 4*s.* He now receives £2 19*s.*, a fall of only about 5*s.* I merely dwell on these figures to show that we have not had the advantage of the reduction in the rate of interest which has been enjoyed by almost all other States. Our Colonies and Dependencies have had greatly the better of us in this respect. In Indian Stocks the fall during the last 20 years has been 17*s.* An investor in Canadian Stock used to receive £5 17*s.* 8*d.* Last year he received £3 14*s.* 7*d.*, a fall of £2 3*s.* 1*d.* An investor in New South Wales Stock received formerly £5 10*s.* He now receives £3 13*s.* 9*d.*, a fall of £1 16*s.* 3*d.* I will not press this argument any further; but what I wish to point out is this—and here I trust I may have the assent of the Committee—that the investors in almost every kind of security have had to accept the fact that the rate of interest is falling, and must now be content with a smaller income from their capital than they enjoyed before. They have had to bow to the inexorable logic of facts, and if now the Government propose to reduce the income of the holders of Government securities, they are simply giving effect to natural causes which have operated on every other kind of security. They are only putting the holders of Consols in the same position as the holders of other securities. In consequence of capital ceasing to command the same rate of interest which it used to command, investors in Consols have to make a certain sacrifice of income—a sacrifice which the State is bound to claim, as other States have done in the interest of the taxpayers of the country, and in the interest of those who wish to see the burdens of the people lightened. Mr. Courtney, I have endeavoured to prove that it is the duty of the Government to tackle this question, and I have endeavoured to prove the favourable circumstances which surround us for carrying out that which we believe to be our duty. And now I wish to call the attention of the Committee to the precedents which we have in this matter, and, technical as the subject is, I trust that I shall not weary the Committee if I point out to them what our forefathers have done in this direction, and what we may learn from the examples which they have set us. There have been, I think, four or five successful conversions in the history of the last 60 years. In 1822 Mr. Vansittart, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, converted Navy and other Five per Cents, amounting on the whole—I call the attention of the Committee to the magnitude of the sums dealt with in those days—to £152,000,000. And here we have the first example of a very interesting point, that in this conversion Mr. Vansittart did not ask the holders to assent; but Parliament enacted that those who did not dissent should be assumed to have assented to the terms proposed. I would call the attention of the Committee to this course, which has been followed on every occasion when a successful conversion has taken place. Mr. Vansittart allowed one fortnight to holders to notify their dissent, and a longer period to residents abroad. Holders not dissenting were deemed to agree. A fortnight in those days represented a much shorter time than a fortnight would at the present day, owing to the difficulty of travelling and the absence of telegraphs; yet the House will observe that in 1822 it was thought right by Parliament to give a fortnight's notice to the holders of a given Stock to say whether they assented, and to enact that if within that limit they did not signify dissent they should be held to have assented to the conversion. It was not assumed that all would assent, and the question arose as to what was to be done with the dissentients. [*A laugh.*] Well, it was very simple; and I am not sorry that this should be emphasized, because it is upon this point that a great part of my case will rest. There has been a general impression that all holders of Government securities, whether Consols or Reduced, or New Three per Cents, are entitled to be all paid off on a certain day in full unless they assent to the terms of conversion offered, and that dissent implies immediate payment, and the consequence is that fundholders are tempted to offer a kind of passive resistance to the State. They say—"We hold some £500,000,000 Stock; and no Government can pay off that sum on a given day; we smile at you; we defy you; you will never be able to deal with us; we know that you cannot touch us." Those who have studied the history of previous conversions will have discovered the great and serious error which fundholders labour under in that respect, and it is in order to dispel that error that I have to trouble the House with the precedents which show that our forefathers certainly did not deem it necessary to proceed in that fashion. Dissentients in the case I have been quoting were to be paid off in the order of the receipt of their notices of dissent. Such payment was to begin four months from the commencement of the time allowed for the notice, and I call the attention of the House to the words "to be continued at such periods and in such manner as Parliament may direct"—that is to say, Parliament then kept in its hands, as it has done in all successful conversions, and as I shall ask it to keep in its hands on the present occasion, on which I hope also to make a successful conversion, the power to pay off the dissentients "at such periods and in such manner as Parliament may direct." Mr. Vansittart proposed to convert £152,000,000, a large order; and what was the amount of dissentients? The amount was under £3,000,000 sterling, and he paid them off. I come now to the next conversion. In 1824 Mr. Robinson had to deal with a somewhat smaller sum. He had to deal with £75,000,000, which he proposed to reduce from 4 to 3½ per cent. In this case six months' notice was necessary. Nevertheless, the non-expression of dissent was here again deemed to signify assent. Six weeks from the 23rd of April were allowed for dissents to come in, and again, it will be asked, what did Mr. Robinson propose to do with those who dissented? Did he propose to pay them all off on a certain day? Not at all. He undertook to pay off one-third of the holding of dissentients on the 10th of October, and the remaining two-thirds were liable to be paid off "at such time or times, and either in one sum or in such proportion or proportions as might be fixed by the Treasury," provided six months' notice was given, and not less than one-tenth part of the remaining amount was paid off at one time. Again it will there be seen that the same principle was acted upon. Parliament did not require the Treasury to pay off the whole of the dissentients on a given day, but it left great elasticity in order to regulate the time of repayment according to the amount held by dissentients; and I particularly wish to point out that having enacted that not less than one-tenth part should be paid off at one time, Parliament evidently meant that the Chancellor of the Exchequer might pay off one-tenth at one time. The dissentients at that time held Stock to the amount of £7,000,000, and they were all paid off in full at once. The next case was Mr. Goulburn's conversion of the New Four Per Cents, amounting to £154,000,000, into an equal amount of Three-and-a-half per Cents, guaranteed for 10 years. This was in 1830. Again assent was presumed unless dissent was signified between the 26th of March and the 24th of April. Less than a month was thus given for dissent; and again dissentients were to be paid off at such periods and in such manner as Parliament might direct, and in the order of the receipt of their notices. I entreat the Committee not to think that I am performing an unnecessary task in citing all these precedents, because they bear very directly on the proposals that the Government are about to make. I wish to prove that the proposals which the Government, on their responsibility, are about to submit to the Committee are entirely in harmony with the precedents that have been set to us, and I shall endeavour to establish that we are proposing to follow those successful conversions on parallel lines; and I shall appeal to this House of Commons to do what previous Houses of Commons have done on similar occasions—to give us similar powers in order that we may have the hope of securing a similar success. What happened under Mr. Goulburn's Act of 1830? The dissentients were only £3,000,000 out of £154,000,000. Remember that in all these cases these eminent men faced the same problem that you have to face now. They faced gigantic sums; they took great powers, and the result was successful, notwithstanding the largeness of the sums. There was a smaller conversion in 1834. Lord Althorp in that year converted Four per Cents, amounting to £10,600,000, into an equal amount of Three-and-a-Half per Cents, guaranteed for six years; and there, again, assent was presumed unless dissent was signified between May 8 and May 28, about three weeks being given for the dissentients to come in. On that occasion there was a much larger proportion of dissentients—namely, £4,000,000, and they were paid off at once by the Savings' Bank money in the hands of the National Debt Commissioners. That was a smaller operation than any I have yet alluded to. Now I come to the great and very successful operation of Mr. Goulburn in 1844, and, as it is mainly on the lines of that precedent that I ask the House to act on this occasion, I wish to call the special attention of the House to its features. It was a gigantic operation—namely, the conversion of £249,000,000 of Three-and-a-Half per Cents into an equal amount of Three-and-a-Quarter per Cents, guaranteed for 10 years, and then falling automatically to Three per Cents, guaranteed for 20 years. There are the existing New Threes as they are called. And with regard to all this Stock, with the exception of £10,000,000 which stood upon a special footing, assent was presumed unless dissent was signified between March 11 and 23. Notices of dissent were to be numbered as received, and dissentients were to be paid off in such order, at such period, and in such manner as Parliament might direct. Again, you find this great power entrusted by Parliament to the Executive Government to pay off dissentients in such order and manner as Parliament might direct. The powers given were strong, the terms offered were fair, and what was the result? Out of £249,000,000, there were only £103,000 of dissentients. I now come to the case of my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), who in 1853 attempted a similar task. He had to face greater difficulties than had been encountered by his Predecessors, and greater difficulties than those which exist at the present moment. That large sum of which I have just spoken, and which had now become the New Threes, but which, though large, were a manageable amount—at that time, I think, some £200,000,000 could not be touched, under the terms of Mr. Goulburn's conversion, until the year 1874. Therefore, the right hon. Gentleman could only deal with the tremendous sum of Consols and Reduced which, I think, amounted at that time to fully £500,000,000; and they stood in this favourable position, that he could not, as previous Chancellors of the Exchequer had done, act suddenly with regard to them; he could not impose the short notice which previous Chancellors of the Exchequer had been able to give, and which had in great part facilitated their success. Consols and Reduced were entitled to a year's notice, and, consequently, the right hon. Gentleman was quite unable to apply that principle of non-dissent signifying assent which characterized all previous conversions. I need not add, because it is in the memory of those who have studied the subject, that the right hon. Gentleman had other difficulties—that, unfortunately, he fell upon evil times, and that before his conversion could be sufficiently tested there were foreign troubles which disturbed the Money Market, and threw down the price of Consols; and thus the scheme which he so carefully elaborated was beaten partly by the state of the Money Market produced by the course of foreign events, and partly by the special difficulty of his position in not being able to give a short notice. The scheme of the right hon. Gentleman was of necessity purely optional, and the consequence was that there was great difficulty in his carrying it out under the circumstances of the year 1853. The right hon. Gentleman at that time spoke of the immense obstacles to approaching those Three per Cents—the great phalanx of Consols as I think he called them—and he pointed out the disadvantage at which any Chancellor of the Exchequer would be placed in tackling Consols. But at the present moment the amount of that gigantic Stock has been considerably reduced, and there exists a Stock which did not exist in his time—namely, the New Three per Cents; or rather they existed in his time, but it was impossible for him to operate upon them; but now they are a Stock which it is possible for a Chancellor of the Exchequer to operate upon. It will be seen that what I wish to suggest to the Committee is this—that the comparative failure of the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman was not due to the inherent difficulties of conversion, but to special circumstances. It was due to the particular circumstances of the time, and to the fact that the very success of the previous conversion had postponed the powers of redemption in the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer with regard to the more manageable portion of the public funds. I now come to the last attempt at conversion—that of my right hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), who again adopted the optional principle. My right hon. Friend did not say that compulsion should never be tried, but he said that he desired to make the first attempt one of agreement rather than of compulsion. After all the criticisms that had been passed on the right hon. Gentleman, I may yet say this with confidence—that the step he took then, though it had at the time only a partial success, has, nevertheless, paved the way to the possibility of a larger conversion now. It has enabled us to test the relative value of other kinds of Stock, and has proved most valuable in preparing the ground. No one who examines those indicators of the present value of Government securities, the Two-and-Three-Quarters and Two-and-a-Half per Cents, will say that the creation of those testing machines of public credit in this country has not been extremely useful, and enabled us to go forward with a confidence which otherwise it would have been exceedingly difficult for us to feel. The terms given by my right hon. Friend were these—he gave £102 of Two-and-Three-Quarters, or £108 of Two-and-a-Halfs (both irredeemable till 1905) for £100 Three per Cents, which was a guarantee of about 20 years from the date of conversion. He further gave holders six weeks in which to decide what course to pursue. But my right hon. Friend did not give this option at once, but some time after the Act was passed; he gave it from September 7th till October 17th, while his Budget speech was made on April 24th. Thus the Stockholders had practically six months in which to reflect, and when we recollect the powerful interests arrayed against my right hon. Friend—and everyone knows the enormous powers that may be exercised by the fundholders—with all this strength arrayed against him, with so long an option and without any compulsory powers behind him, it is not surprising that he did not succeed to the extent which he could have wished. Nevertheless, he succeeded in converting £4,600,000 into Two-and-Three-Quarters, and £19,200,000 into Two-and-a-Halfs, and this Two-and-a-Half per cent Stock which my right hon. Friend created has been most valuable to us. I do not speak of the price of Two-and-a-Half Stock during the last two or three days, when the imminence of conversion may have had some effect; but this Stock had previously shown that the credit of the country was better than a 3 per cent credit, and therefore the Government were bound to see whether they could not utilize in some way or other that better credit, in order to secure some advantage for the taxpayer of the country. Now, I wish to ask the Committee what is the moral of the precedents with which I have troubled them at such length? It appears to me that they show us that the conditions of successful conversion on a large scale are, that assent should be presumed in the absence of an expression of dissent, that the time allowed for the expression of dissent should be strictly limited, and that power should be taken to pay off the dissentients in such manner as Parliament may direct. This latter power may be taken either in the same Bill that fixes the terms of conversion, or, as has been more frequently the case, in a separate and subsequent Bill. The first Bill usually states that the dissentients shall be paid off in such manner as Parliament may direct, and a second Bill is then afterwards introduced determining the mode of payment, Parliament being thus guided in the steps it may take for redemption by the amount of the dissentients. Two other lessons are to be learnt—that there has existed in nearly all these cases a strong objection to add to the capital of the Debt, and that the greatest success has attended these operations where the rate of interest has been reduced by gradual steps, the interest of each stage being guaranteed for a certain number of years. Mr. Courtney, having now dealt with the precedents, I come to the proposals which it is my duty to submit. I would wish, in the first place, to state the position of the three kinds of Stock at the present time. Those who have given study to the subject are thoroughly aware of the difference in these Stocks, but there is a kind of popular idea that Consols mean Three per Cents generally. Technically the term Consols mean Consols proper, and not the New Three per Cents or the Reduced Three per Cents. Strictly speaking the great bulk of the Stocks are called in the Market Consols, while there are smaller amounts called the New Three per Cents and the Reduced, different conditions attaching to each of these different Stocks. the present figures are as follows:—the New Threes amount to £166,000,000, the Reduced to £69,000,000, and Consols to £323,000,000. I may now point out in passing that the Committee will observe how greatly the operations of previous Chancellors of the Exchequer in reducing the National Debt have succeeded in bringing these figures into much more manageable proportions than they had some 30 years ago, when it was infinitely more difficult to attempt such a scheme as the Government are about to propose to-day. And I wish to call particular attention to this fact—that of the three Stocks I have named, while Consols and Reduced can only be paid off after a year's notice, and in sums of not less than £500,000 at a time, the New Threes, on the other hand, which have survived for 14 years the period when their guarantee against redemption came to an end, can be paid off without notice and in any amounts. This Stock represents and really is the same Stock as that which endured conversion at the hands of Mr. Goulburn in 1844, and the time for which it was guaranteed against redemption and reduction of interest expired in 1874. It is most important to remember that by the terms of its creation this Stock was liable and subject to redemption after 1874. There is no other provision bearing upon its redemption, yet it has been contended that it can only be paid off *en bloc* at one time. Whether that contention is accurate or not depends upon the reading of the words, "subject and liable to redemption after the year 1874." Anything further is inference, and it appears to me that inference is all the other way, and that all the precedents up to this time go to show that Parliament would be able to pay off the Stock in any manner it pleased. The whole dealing of Parliament with these matters has gone to show that Parliament will not allow the Government to be reduced to an extremity, and to be forced to pay off every holder of a particular Stock by a given day. There has been a desire to deal with the holder fairly and equitably, but, at the same time, in a manner compatible with the interests of the State. I reject entirely the theory that the New Threes must be paid off at one moment and in one mass. Certainly equity must be observed in their payment. It is the duty of a great State and it rests with those who are responsible for its acts, and who represent it for the time being, to see that every possible justice and equity is shown to the creditors of the State. The equity in this case is, that they are liable to be redeemed after a certain date. But they are not entitled to the year's notice which attaches to Consols and Reduced. They are precisely in the same position to-day as the bulk of Three-and-a-Halfs were at the time of Mr. Goulburn's conversion. The present Government will deal with the New Threes as Mr. Goulburn dealt with the Three-and-a-Halfs in 1844, with certain modifications, which I will explain to the Committee, and they will follow the same lines, *mutatis mutandis*, as were followed by Mr. Goulburn in 1844. And now we have next to ask ourselves in what manner we ought to proceed — that is to say, if we are going to convert, what is the best system of conversion; and what are the terms we are going to give? Four courses are possible. We could convert into Two-and-a-Halfs, or into Two-and-Three-Quarters, or into a Two and Three-Quarters Stock falling after a certain number of years to 2½, or we could give an option to take two different kinds of Stock. With regard to the latter alternative—that of giving an option to take two different classes of Stock—history teaches that simplicity is one of the best secrets of success; and it is better not to confuse the mind of the investor by offering him several alternatives. It is far better to rely upon some simple and equitable proposal which he can easily and thoroughly understand. Therefore I reject the idea of giving an option. Let me call attention here to a matter to which I must again allude before I sit down. It has been represented to me from different quarters, both by the representatives of trustees and by the representatives of the great banking interests, that if it can be done, it is far preferable and more to the interest of all parties concerned that there should be one large Stock. I propose to follow, generally, that principle, and that principle will have effect given to it if the holders of Consols and the holders of Reduced are willing in any considerable numbers to accept the same terms, with such modifications as I shall point out, as will be given to the holders of the New Threes with which I propose to deal on the lines laid down by Mr. Goulburn. There is no reason why the three kinds of Three per Cents should not be amalgamated into one Stock, with great and evident convenience and advantage to the holders of each of them. To that end it is desirable to establish a system of quarterly instead of half-yearly dividends, which will be more advantageous for the State, and more convenient for the investors themselves. Having thus rejected the idea of offering to the investor a number of alternatives, I also reject another suggestion—namely, that of establishing a Two-and-Three-Quarters per Cent Stock, which does not go down automatically to Two and a Half. My right hon. Friend the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) was right, in making his optional proposal, not to go too far, or attempt too much; but dealing, as I think the Committee will, compulsorily with the matter, and requiring the investor either to accept the terms offered or to be paid off, I do not think that I should secure the advantage to which the State is entitled if I were simply to convert into a Two-and-Three-Quarters per Cent Stock. We ought, I think, to reduce the Stock to 2¾ for a term of years, and then to let it descend automatically without any further action of Parliament to 2½ per cent, precisely in the same manner as the Three-and-a-Half per Cents descended automatically, first to 3¼ and ultimately to 3 per cent. You will see from what I have said that I also reject the proposal that the Stock should be immediately reduced to 2½ per cent. I do not deny that strong arguments have been urged upon me in that direction. The interest, however, of the investing public and that of the great banking community in this matter is not entirely identical. I am not sure but that the banking community would prefer a Stock of 2½ per cent, at once settling the question as regards interest, and leaving room for an increase in the capital of the Debt. But, on the other hand, the interest of annuitants and of the community at large seem to lie in a different direction. The investing public do not care as much as the banking community do for a rise in the price of Stock, because a great many of them have only an interest in the revenue derived from Consols and other Stock for a given time, and not in the body of the Stock. It is useless to say to the annuitant that the price of his Stock will rise from £95 to par, in the course of a few years, if in the meantime the interest is to be cut down to 2½ per cent instead of 2¾. I think Mr. Goulburn was right in adopting the principle of breaking the fall to the annuitant, and that it will be better to go down by degrees than at once to make ½ per cent difference in the rate of interest. If you go by very large steps at a time you will make the case of the present annuitant harder than was the case of the old annuitant, because taking ½ per cent off 3 per cent will be felt by the annuitant more than taking ½ per cent off 3½ per cent. Looking, therefore, to the general interest of the community, the Government have decided not to follow the course of reducing the rate to 2½ per cent immediately. Another chief reason for not taking that course is, that we do not wish to add, as we should be compelled to add if we proceeded on that basis, to the capital of the Debt. You may say that you can establish a Sinking Fund, and so adjust the matter that there would be really no difference. Nevertheless, there is a strong objection to the system of offering a considerable bonus to the holders of existing Stock to induce them to convert it into Stock of a lower denomination. We have, therefore, accepted the principle of a Two and Three Quarters per Cent Stock, descending automatically to 2½, and after the most careful examination of the prices of the different Stocks representing the credit of the State, of the Local Loans Stock, of the 2½, the 2¾, and of the Three per Cent Stock, we have thought that a middle term, that would at once secure equity to the State and to the fundholders, would be to give a term of 15 years at 2¾, descending automatically to 2½ for 20 years. The right hon. Member for Edinburgh proposed a scheme by which 2¾ would be given for 20 years, and £102 of the new Stock for each £100 of old. The advance, however, of what I may term the credit of the country and the experience we have gained of the Stock created by the right hon. Gentleman have indicated that it is desirable to shorten the number of years, and we should not be entitled to adopt his scheme without injustice to the taxpayers, or to give a larger number of years at 2¾ than I have stated. But I ought to mention one further modification which we propose. I have said that we offer 15 years of 2¾, but we are anxious that the terms we offer to the holders of the New Three per Cents should be also accepted by the holders of Consols and Reduced Stock, with certain modifications. The holders of those Stocks are entitled anyhow to continue to receive 3 per cent for one year longer. As, therefore, we wish to give the same Stock for the sake of simplicity to the holders of every kind of Three per Cents, and at the same time to insure the large Stock I have alluded to, we propose to make this further modification—that instead of the New Threes continuing only a half year at their present interest of 3 per cent, we shall give them one year at 3 per cent and 14 years at 2¾. This will give trustees time to turn round, and annuitants time to adjust themselves to the new terms. The holders of New Threes would in any case be entitled to continue at the same rate of interest from April to October next, but we propose to let them continue at the same rate of interest from April next to the following April. I am bound to say that in making this proposal I have consulted the general interest rather than my own, if I may say, so as Chancellor of the Exchequer, because in postponing the relief to the taxpayer for a whole year I am destroying the advantage which personally I might have derived from a reduction of interest that would have made an important difference in the Budget for the year over which I shall have control. A year of grace in which they can turn round and accommodate their expenditure to their incomes will be, I believe, an immense boon to small investors. I have stated that dividends should be paid quarterly. Assent will be presumed unless dissent is expressed by March 29.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): Will that apply to the case of all Stocks?

Mr. GOSCHEN: I am obliged to the noble Lord for his interruption. My answer is—No, only to the New Three per Cents. I will refer to the case of the other Stocks presently. In making this proposal I shall, of course, have to appeal, I hope not in vain, to the House and to hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite to facilitate the passage of this Bill, so that it may pass this House before March 29, because they will see, by what has gone before, that upon the rapidity with which such a measure is passed, and upon the decision and determination of the House to support the Government, its success must ultimately depend. I trust, therefore, that if the principle of the Bill is opposed by right hon. Gentlemen opposite, they will fight fairly, so that if it is supported by the majority of the House it may be passed within a reasonable time. I also trust that right hon. Gentlemen opposite will think that this is a fair notice to give, and that the time could not have been extended without danger to the measure, and without departing from substantial precedents which have resulted in success. As regards trustees, I am anxious that they should have every possible opportunity afforded them to remove their Trust Funds to other securities if they should think fit to do so, and we, therefore, propose that the time for trustees to express their dissent should be extended to April 12. There are frequently difficulties in the case of the trustees of charities and of public property, and I am not anxious, and I am sure that the House of Commons is not anxious, that trustees should be taken at a disadvantage. I may further say that clauses will be introduced into the measure to relieve trustees from any responsibility connected with the proposed conversion of the Stock held by them, and, under the circumstances of the case, to make their action easier. Provision will also be make in regard to powers of attorney and other matters, so that the scheme may work smoothly, as, in fact, similar schemes have done on previous occasions. I now come to the question of Consols and Reduced. Here we must bear in mind, first, the expediency of amalgamating all the Stocks into one great Stock; and, secondly, the privilege enjoyed by holders of Consols and Reduced that they cannot be paid off without a year's notice—that is to say, they have an option against the State. If we were to give notice tomorrow that Consols and Reduced should be redeemable after the lapse of a year, the holders would be able to wait and to take advantage of any events which might happen and which might tell against the Government, and the Government might be placed in the position of wanting funds, not, indeed, to pay them all off, which would not be necessary, but to deal substantially with the Stock. It will be an immense advantage if the holders of Consols and Reduced can be induced to forego their right of notice for one year, and to accept at once the same Stock which is offered to the holders of the New Threes. What I offer, therefore, the holders of Consols and Reduced is this—that, in consideration of their foregoing the right of notice for a year, they should have the advantage of ¼ per cent; in fact, that they should receive £100 of the new Stock and 5*s.* in place of every £100, the 5*s.* to be paid in cash on conversion, so that they may take identically the same Stock as is offered to the holders of the New Threes. I do not know whether I have made myself distinctly understood. I wish to be very clear on this point, and the Committee will allow me to repeat the statement. In consideration of the holders of Consols and Reduced assenting to come in now within a given date—that is to say, before the 12th of April—and thus relieving the Government of the difficulties it might encounter, not insuperable difficulties, in giving the notice I have spoken of, they will be entitled to 5*s.* advantage per £100 over the New Threes. I may further add that in the case of the New Three per Cents, where conversion is automatic—that is, where we presume assent unless dissent is expressed—in fact, in the compulsory part of the scheme, a commission to agents, solicitors, or brokers would seem out of place, and I do not propose to offer it. But in the case of Consols and Reduced, where the initiative rests with the holders, and where a large portion of the trustees and investors most probably consult their agents—whether they are bankers, solicitors, or brokers—and where proceedings must be taken at the Bank of England for giving effect to the option, if exercised, I propose to authorize the Bank of England to pay a small agency commission of 1*s*. 6*d*. per £100 to authorized agents, so that the holders of such Stock may not have to sacrifice any part of the ¼ per cent which is given them in consideration of their foregoing their year's notice in any expenses attendant on the conversion. And now I wish to state, both with regard to the New Threes, where the compulsory process is employed, and with regard to Consols and Reduced, what are the arguments to be urged why holders should accept the terms of conversion. I wish to point out to them in what position they would stand if they did not accept the terms which we give them within the time which we offer. And, first, as to the New Threes, let me point out to the Committee the position in which they stand. The holders might, perhaps, use two arguments. One is to say to the Government—"You cannot pay us off; we hold £166,000,000, and we defy you to be able to pay off that amount." The other argument they might use is to say—"We do not mind if you do pay us off." Now, with regard to the first argument, I have pointed out to the Committee that Mr. Goulburn risked paying off in 1830 £150,000,000, and in 1844 £250,000,000. But the Exchequer at the present moment is infinitely stronger than it was in 1844. Consider for a moment the immense resources at the disposal of the Government. In 1844 there were under £30,000,000 in the hands of the Savings Banks Commissioners; but I ask the Committee to remember that that fund, which is at the disposal of the Government for assisting them in transactions of this kind, at the present time, instead of being £30,000,000, is £60,000,000, immediately available to be utilized, if Parliament thinks fit, and safely utilized, in paying off dissentients. Then there is the cheapness of capital at the present moment and the resource of drawing on Exchequer bonds and bills. I will not trouble the Committee by reading the precedents; but in all the cases where Acts have been passed to make payment to dissentients, the widest powers have been entrusted to the Treasury in order to deal with them. I notice that in the debate of 1844—perhaps the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian may remember it—not a single question was asked of Mr. Goulburn as to the measures he would take for paying off dissentients; and in 1830, when one or two Members raised the point, Mr. Goulburn declined, I think very wisely, to state the process by which he would pay them off. I do not know whether it will be thought that I should be pressed to state the precise methods by which dissentients would be paid off. I should strongly deprecate such a course; I should strongly deprecate being placed at a disadvantage compared with previous Chancellors of the Exchequer, who have been allowed great latitude on this point; and I hope right hon. Gentlemen opposite may see their way in this respect also to follow the precedents which have been set. All I ask is that the Government may be given the power which has always been given hitherto—namely, the power of paying off the dissentients in such manner, and in such order, and at such periods, as Parliament may direct. If this be done, I do not think it possible that we should be driven into a corner. The resources at our disposal are extremely great. Personally, I do not anticipate any large number of dissents, for reasons which I think will commend themselves to the Committee; but if there are a considerable number, I make no doubt we shall have ample power, with the assistance of Parliament, to take such measures as will promptly discharge their claims. Now I come to the second possible argument—"We do not mind if you do pay us off. We will take the money at par and re-invest it in other securities." I will assume, but I will not grant, that the new Stock will not be above par. But this is the point to which I invite the attention of the Committee—in what manner are the holders going to invest those millions which they say they will take from the Exchequer? Where will they find the investments? To what markets will they go with the sovereigns in which they will be paid off? Where will they find safe Stocks in which to invest in the circumstances? I say they could not find such Stocks; and I can prophesy what would happen. They would have to come and buy the very securities which we should put on the Market in order to pay them off, and to take them at a lower interest than the Stocks they now own. I trust I have made that clear. My argument is this. Supposing £50,000,000 were to be paid off; it will be raised by Exchequer Bills, by the issue of new Stock, or it will be taken from the Saving Bank Funds. There will be no new securities of the highest character in which the money so paid could be invested except those new securities which we shall offer. Or, again, supposing they did buy other securities, those who sold those securities to the buyers would be the persons who would be compelled to invest in the Stock which we put on the Market. I do not, therefore, apprehend that there will be any large number of dissentients among holders of New Threes. But I now ask why Consols and Reduced should come in, protected as they are by a year's notice? Consols are less than £330,000,000 now, and of Reduced there are not more than £60,000,000 worth in the hands of the public. If we were to give notice to Consols and Reduced now, they would be very much in the same position next year which New Threes are in to-day, only that they would have to be paid off in amounts of £500,000 or more. But it would not be necessary to pay off in such small amounts. We have resources now which our Predecessors did not enjoy. We have £10,000,000 a-year which has to be invested in Government Funds; and looking to the fact that it was clearly not the intention of Parliament to pay off Consol-holders in a day, it seems to me to be clear that we should be able and would determine to deal with Consol-holders, if they do not see their way to come in on the optional terms, not indeed in an arbitrary, but in a very decisive manner. We cannot endure this state of things to continue, that they should at once enjoy the rights of 3 per cent interest, when the national credit justifies a lower rate, and should be paid off not at par, but at 2 or 3 per cent above par. Therefore, it is obvious that it will be necessary to make arrangements, after first giving a year's notice to Consols and Reduced, in order to begin the process of the gradual redemption of those Stocks. But I trust that such a process will not be necessary. If they come in now they gain terms which I think the Committee will feel are fair terms. We offer them 5*s.* down, which represents the difference between 2¾ per cent and 3 per cent for one year; and they will have what I know they value, a single large Stock, an object which might be defeated if Consol-holders in large and overwhelming numbers should refuse to come in; and surely it would also be to the interest of the Consol-holders were the Market in the largest sense to be relieved from that constant apprehension which we felt if there is a likelihood of their being paid off by degrees, and from that uncertainty which has so long prevailed. I trust, therefore, that, taking a prudent view of their own interests, at least a large number of them will take the new Stock on the terms which we propose. I trust that I have made our proposals sufficiently clear to the Committee, considering their extremely technical character. I need only add this with regard to Consols, in case a difficulty should be raised about the dividends being payable on the 5th of January and the 5th of July, that if the holders come in they will be paid at once the accrued interest, which is ¾ per cent on the 5th of April, and will then receive the same Stock as all the others — a Stock bearing a quarterly dividend, of which the first quarter will be paid on the 5th July next. It remains for me to show, what I trust will be of interest to the Committee—namely, the saving to the Revenue which will result from these proposals. If the New Threes alone are converted, there will arise an advantage to the Revenue from April, 1889, of £410,000 a-year; and from April, 1903, of £820,000; but if the conversion should be thoroughly successful, if Consols and Reduced should come in, if our hopes in that respect be realized, then from April, 1889, there would be in round figures a saving of £1,400,000 a-year, and after 14 years more a saving of £2,800,000 a-year. I have put these figures before the Committee, and the

Committee will judge whether they are a sufficient inducement to engage this House upon the great work to which I invite them in the measure which I have announced. We know how greatly we touch some vast interests in this matter; but these interests are not vaster than those which have been tackled successfully before by other Chancellors of the Exchequer. The country is as strong to deal with a problem of this sort as it has been in previous times, and I firmly believe that if Parliament should see its way to support the present Government in this matter, as previous Parliaments have supported other Governments, we shall be able to give this great relief to the taxpayers of the country, while at the same time offering what I regard as most fair and equitable terms to the holders of the public funds. Mr. Goulburn, in the speech to which I have so often alluded, repeatedly spoke of the duty of the Government, as servants of the public, to make the best terms possible for the public, but also to show sufficient tenderness in dealing with the creditors of the State, so as not to injure that great engine of credit upon which all States must rely in times of trouble. It would be a great disaster if any proposals of this kind, though they might relieve us from a certain burden, affected in any way the reputation of the country, either for honesty or for power. I believe that our present proposals are conceived in a sense of equity both to the creditors of the State, and to the taxpayers. We place large proposals before the Committee, and appeal to the House of Commons to pass them rapidly into law, if hon. Members see that they can countenance the principles which we have embodied in them.

Motion made and Question proposed,

"That it is expedient to authorise the conversion of the New Three Per Cent. Annuities, the Consolidated Three Per Cent. Annuities, and the Reduced Three Per Cent. Annuities into certain other Annuities, and to provide for the redemption of the New Three Per Cent. Annuities."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): It is with great satisfaction that I rise to discharge a debt, which I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer has laid upon us, by making the acknowledgments which his statement deserves. It is quite plain to me, apart from the merits of his plan, that the project he has laid before us is the result of laborious, careful, and thorough examination, which has been conducted in a wise spirit of regard for a long course of precedents which have afforded him material help and guidance in considering his proposals; and likewise that his mind is fully alive to the principle which ought to govern his conduct, and to the great objects which he ought to have in view in seeking economy for the benefit of the State and the nation; but at the same time bearing in mind that economy can never be safely sought or satisfactorily attained if there be any forgetfulness of the principles of equity in the case of those with whom we deal as public creditors, and also bearing in mind the most fatal of all errors undoubtedly which a Finance Minister or Parliament could commit—namely, the taking of any steps which would have the effect of lowering the standard of public credit in this country, or producing any uncertainty in the public mind as to the position which Parliament has maintained. So far I have very great satisfaction in congratulating the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon the plan which he has laid before us, and upon the manner in which he has addressed himself to a very arduous labour. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the midst of the vast subject before him, not unnaturally, did not mention to us on what day he proposes to bring this subject under the consideration of the House with a view to a definitive vote being taken upon it. I take it for granted that he has no intention of asking the House on this occasion for any vote which will in the slightest degree commit the House or fetter the freedom of its judgment. One word on the subject, and it is that, having a recollection of what has passed on previous occasions, I am quite sure there is no way in which we could more seriously injure the great public interests involved in this question than by making any undue demand upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer for a lengthened time, with a view to the consideration of this matter. Of all things to be desired, and what I am sure I may expect my hon. Friends near me to keep in view and to impress on our minds is, that it is of the highest importance that we should proceed to give a definitive judgment upon this question at the very earliest moment consistent with the largeness of some of the points and the necessary complexity of the subject. Therefore, whatever reasonable demand the Chancellor of the Exchequer may make in that respect undoubtedly will have our support. I think, without prejudice to the freedom of judgment of the House, I may fairly say that the prospect which the right hon. Gentleman has laid before us inspires us with the hope that much public benefit may be extracted from the plan which he has propounded. I will not say whether it is to operate upon the largest scale which the most sanguine man may hope for, or whether it will operate only upon a more limited scale which the Chancellor of the Exchequer regards as being more absolutely within his reach; but I will confine myself to the general observation that much good, I feel satisfied, will be extracted from it. No doubt, the question of the precise amount of time to be allowed for giving assent is a question of considerable delicacy and difficulty. I do not think it right that we should be more severe on the present occasion than the latest precedent warrants. But, on the other hand, it is right that we should take into view that within the last 30 or 40 years, and since the latest of the greater operations, the means of communication have been very greatly facilitated and expedited, and something may be allowed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on that very account. There was one point on which the Chancellor of the Exchequer made an appeal to us, and which I am very desirous to answer. He said that he hoped that there would be no undue disposition to press him for a disclosure of the terms and particulars at the present moment, or at any early stage, as to the mode in which repayment is to be effected in those cases in which it is necessary. With regard to this subject, the Chancellor of the Exchequer undoubtedly made out a very strong case from references to former examples, showing that it has been the practice of Parliament, founded upon wise principles of consideration for the public interest, to reserve to itself great discretion, either to be exercised by itself or by the Executive Government, and it has not been the practice to make premature engagements which might have the effect of causing considerable embarrassment at later stages with respect to the details of the manner in which, in the event of refusal to accept these terms, repayment to the public creditor would be made. Then I wish to refer to another point mentioned by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and undoubtedly it is a point which the public creditor will justly and wisely take into his consideration. I speak here from a long experience of these matters, and having felt most severely the comparative impotence of the Exchequer as it stood 40 or 50 years ago, with respect to the amount resting in its hands and available at its own discretion for making good its position in the Money Market in the event of a great monetary operation upon the National Debt. I think that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has in no degree overstated the immense improvement in the position of the Exchequer. I may even say that, although the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not understated it, yet the statement he made is one which would not of itself, I think, give the full measure of that improvement. In one portion of his speech he said that at the time of Mr. Goulburn's operation the Government had nothing in their hands excepting £30,000,000 of Savings Banks' deposits, which, however, might be regarded as a fund intended to assist them in carrying through an operation of this kind. He then went on to say that there is now a capital of £60,000,000 instead of £30,000,000 at the command of the Government. Now I venture to make two remarks upon that subject, both of them tending not to weaken, but rather to enhance, the effect which it may be calculated to produce. First of all with regard to the £30,000,000. At the time when Mr. Goulburn had to effect his operation we had not yet reached to the full acknowledgment of what I take to be undeniably the sound and true doctrine that, with regard to Savings Banks' deposits, the State or the Chancellor of the Exchequer is a banker and not a trustee. The old doctrine which the trustees of Savings Banks were then disposed to promote was that he was only a trustee, and had no more discretion in the use of those funds than a trustee possesses. A banker does, at his own risk, as he thinks proper with the funds at his command. The Chancellor of the Exchequer does what he thinks proper, or what Parliament has thought proper to enable him to do. It was only in a long course of years that that doctrine came thoroughly to be understood. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in another portion of his speech, stated what is most important—namely, that if you take the capital value of the deposits now in the hands of the State, they are far more than £60,000,000. I believe they have distinctly reached £100,000,000; but for convenience, and even the enhancement of the power of the Government, a large portion of these deposits has been converted into Annuities now rapidly repayable, which consequently places a large amount month by month, or certainly quarter by quarter, at the disposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. This I venture to say, because I think it is material, that it should be understood that if, on the one side, he is endeavouring to deal with a very large amount of the Public Debt, on the other hand, he is in a position of strength which has been gradually in course of expansion, and which I hope Parliament will enable him to use to the public advantage. I will not detain the House with further observations, except on this occasion to give my congratulations and the expression to him of my hearty good wishes for the careful and candid and, as far as possible, favourable consideration of these proposals, which evidently have been elaborated with so much care by my right hon. Friend, and the expression of my own full conviction that no motives connected with the organization of Party or difference of opinion on any other subject, will prevent the House, or any portion or section of the House, from giving to this subject and to these proposals an entirely and absolutely candid and impartial consideration.

Mr. GOSCHEN: In reply to the question put by my right hon. Friend I have to say that I shall bring in a Bill founded on the Report of these Resolutions on Monday. The Bill, I hope, will be in the hands of hon. Members on Tuesday, and we propose to take the second reading on Friday at a Morning Sitting at 2 o'clock. I would add the expression of my most cordial thanks to the right hon. Gentleman for the manner in which he has received these proposals, and say how deeply gratified I am to have, I will not say the countenance, for I do not wish to commit my right hon. Friend, but the general sense of approval of my right hon. Friend, who was in the Government of Sir Robert Peel in 1844, when Mr. Goulburn's second great and successful conversion took place.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): I understand that the second reading of the Bill will be taken on the 16th of March?

Mr. GOSCHEN: Yes.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: Then what will be the exact day on which notices will be given. I understand it will be on the 29th of March?

Mr. GOSCHEN: In the case of the Act of 1844 Mr. Goulburn proposed Resolutions on the 8th of March; the Royal Assent was given on the 22nd of March, and the time for expression of dissent expired on the 23rd of March. In this case the time for such expression is prolonged beyond what it was in the days of Mr. Goulburn—namely, to the 29th March; but we shall press forward the Bill if there is a general feeling in favour of it in the House. After it has passed the second reading on Friday we shall proceed immediately to take the Committee stage, and then the remaining stages as fast as possible. I should hope, if there is a general assent to the broad principles of the Bill, that it may become law on the 23rd or 24th of March.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: The right hon. Gentleman will excuse me, I am sure, for asking one other question. On what date are we to understand that notices will issue?

Mr. GOSCHEN: No individual notices have been given in this case.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: I am speaking of *Gazette* notices.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Of course, every opportunity will be taken to give the utmost publicity. I have not examined all the precedents on this point; but every means will be taken to ventilate the subject so that holders generally will know what is going on; and I shall be most careful to see that every one has proper notice.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) asked if this would affect the interest on the Savings Bank Accounts. Would this be dealt with in the Bill?

MR. GOSCHEN: No, it is not touched in the Bill. No doubt it is a question which will arise at a future date.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I may point out to the hon. Gentleman that this is an entirely separate and distinct arrangement. The position with regard to the Savings Bank Trustees is a mere coincidence.

SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.) asked how the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer would ascertain who were the trustees, seeing that the Bank of England did not recognize trustees in their books.

MR. GOSCHEN: If the hon. Gentleman puts this question at another time, I will explain what the clauses will be with regard to trustees. The point is one that will not fail to be noticed.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London) said, he would point out that obviously the statement of his right hon. Friend would go all over the country in the papers of that evening, and therefore no one would have reason to complain of want of notice.

MR. MURDOCH (Reading) asked when the bonus of ½ per cent to the consenting holders of Consols was to be paid—whether or not it would be paid with the first dividend.

MR. GOSCHEN: Yes, Sir; it will be paid with the first quarterly dividend, if not before.

MR. BARTLEY said, that he understood that until there was fresh legislation the Savings Bank system would remain as at present.

MR. GOSCHEN: Yes Sir.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

The following Resolutions were also *agreed to:—*

(2.) That the sums required in connection with such conversion and redemption be raised by the creation of new stock, or by the issue of Exchequer Bonds, Exchequer Bills, or Treasury Bills, or by temporary loans, and that the principal moneys so borrowed, and all interest from time to time due thereon, be charged on the Consolidated Fund.

(3.) That such new stock be created, bearing interest for the year ending on the 5th day of April 1889 at the rate of three pounds per cent, and thereafter until the 5th day of April 1903, at the rate of two pounds fifteen shillings per cent, and thereafter at the rate of two pounds ten shillings per cent, and that the dividends thereon be paid quarterly.

(4.) That all sums for defraying expenses incurred in carrying out such conversion and redemption, including such sums as may be required for facilitating such conversion, and additional remuneration to the Banks of England and Ireland, be charged on the Consolidated Fund.

(5.) That provision be made for carrying out the arrangements necessary for such conversion of stocks and redemption of annuities.

Resolutions to be reported upon *Monday* next.

EAST INDIA (PURCHASE AND CONSTRUCTION OF RAILWAYS) BILL.

SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [5th March], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

Debate *resumed.*

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Thursday* next.

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY TO THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND. [SALARY, &c.]

COMMITTEE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, he wished to make an appeal to hon. Members below the Gangway opposite not to oppose this Resolution. He was aware that those hon. Member strongly objected to the Bill; but he would undertake that full opportunity for discussion should be afforded on the second reading. It would be quite unusual to oppose the measure at this stage.

Motion made, and Question proposed.

"That it is expedient to authorize the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of a Salary to the Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland."—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) said, he objected to this Bill *ab initio*, because it created a new office. It was all very well for the right hon. Gentleman to tell them that they would have an opportunity of discussing the details of the Bill, but he claimed before the Bill was introduced, or even this stage taken that some explanation should be given by the Government of the principle that justified them in introducing it at all. It was monstrous, in view of the denunciations which had been launched against the system of Government practiced in Dublin Castle, by both Parties in that House, that any measure should be introduced for the purpose of creating a new Office, no matter what might be the salary in connection with the Castle. The Bill was the more extraordinary because they had been favoured beforehand with experience of what they might expect; they knew already the value of the Gentleman to whom they were now asked to give this salary. He also understood from reports that had been spread that the right hon. Gentleman was to receive payment for his past work. Speaking from their experience the action of the Government had been neither more nor less than a device of extreme ingenuity to make the condition of things at Dublin Castle worse than it was before; because, whereas at least they had in the past one official on whom they could come in that House and upon whom they could cast the responsibility of the Dublin Castle system, they had now the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet (Colonel King-Harman) opposed as a buffer between the responsibility of the Irish Government and the Irish Members in the House. It was recognized by the whole country that the duty and business of the right hon. Gentleman was to refuse all information to Irish Members and to answer their Questions as an irresponsible official. They knew that the right hon. Gentleman had no more power over the Government Department than any one of themselves, and it was, therefore, monstrous that the only official who now answered Questions on Irish affairs should be an official without any responsibility whatever. They had been subjected to this method for nearly a year, and its object was thoroughly understood by them. They had noticed that although the Irish Secretary entered the House, all the hard work was done by the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet, who protected the Government from being called to account for the proceedings of the Irish Administration. He considered it an extremely unwise proceeding on the part of the Government to attach to the Irish Department this well-known favourite at the Castle in Dublin. The system at Dublin Castle had not only been denounced by the Party in that House denominated Home Rulers, but denunciation equally strong had come from the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale, and other Members of the Unionist Party. It was not many years ago that he had read in a speech of the noble Marquess that the system pursued in Dublin Castle could not continue long, and yet the Government were about to add another vested interest to the mass of corruption with which the House would be called upon very shortly to deal, and they were to have another right hon. Gentleman connected with the system at a salary of £1,500 or £2,000 a-year who would eventually have to be bought out. He believed that in view of this consensus of opinion the whole system of Government in Ireland would have to be altered before long, either in the direction in which the Unionist Party or the Home Rule Party wanted to go. Everyone admitted that the change must be sweeping and radical, and that it must come soon. Not a single reason had been vouchsafed by the Government to the House for this deliberate creation of a new officer whose vested interest he had already said would have to be bought out hereafter at an enormous cost to the taxpayers of the country. He said that Irish Members before allowing this Bill to go any further were entitled to a statement on the part of the Irish Government as to why this new Office was necessary. Before sitting down he should once more protest in the name of the Irish Members against that method of putting up the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet to answer Questions on Irish matters. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman had stated some time ago on a certain occasion, when he visited his constituents in the Isle of Thanet, that since he became Under Secretary for Ireland he had laboured 14 hours a-day, and had not received a shilling for his labour. He (Mr. Dillon) regretted that he had laboured 14 hours a-day at his work, because he was truly at a loss to know at what he had been labouring. But if the right hon. and gallant

Gentleman wanted some relief from his labour all he could say was that Irish Members would gladly spare him from the House of Commons at Question Time. The power of questioning Ministers was one of the most important rights that could be possessed by Members of Parliament, but the power of questioning Ministers had become for Irish Members nothing more than a farce, because they were not allowed to question anyone who was responsible for the Government of Ireland, but a lay figure, a most imposing one he admitted, had been put before the Chief Secretary to answer their Questions, and they might just as well set up an automaton for the purpose so far as the Government of Ireland was concerned. It was a perfect mockery to put up a man of this kind to answer Questions with regard to one of the most important Departments of Government, and for that reason he contended that Irish Members had every reason and were entitled to struggle with all their power against the first stage of this proposal.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne) said, he was very reluctant not to be able to comply with the request of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, that the Opposition should allow the present stage to be taken without discussion. The circumstances under which the Motion was made were not quite of an ordinary kind. On the 14th of April last the Chief Secretary for Ireland said, in answer to a Question of his, that no salary was to be attached to this Office. Not satisfied to leave the matter there, he put a Question to the First Lord of the Treasury, and the First Lord of the Treasury made a very distinct announcement indeed—

> "No document will be laid before Parliament describing the nature and duties of the Office, or the conditions under which it is held; but it is right to state distinctly that no salary or profit is attached to this Office."—(3 *Hansard* [313] 1003).

When it turned out that, after all, a salary was to be attached to it, surely they had a right, at the present stage, to ask an explanation from the Government. The Chief Secretary for Ireland the other night alleged some sort of necessity for such an Office on the ground that he had difficult Bills to conduct through Parliament, and that he needed this assistance to answer Questions. But his Predecessors in the same Office—the late Mr. Forster and the Member for the Bridgeton Division—were quite as much bombarded with Questions as the right hon. Gentleman was, and the measures they had in charge were not less onerous in their character. When he was Chief Secretary, although he did not hold the Office long, there was no Irish officer in the House but himself. He should like to hear from the right hon. Gentleman what was the case to be made out for the creation of this Office.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.) said, of course, the Government had ample power to create this Office without salary; but also, of course, when it became an office of emolument, it was necessary to get an Act. When last year he stated that no salary was attached to the Office, no salary was actually payable; but they never pretended that they were going to ask any Gentleman to permanently undertake the onerous and responsible duties of this Office without pay. They were of opinion that even an Irish Under Secretary was worthy of his hire. He was not there to deny that Mr. Forster's duties were severe; but even Mr. Forster never had so much responsible work to do as he had in the last Session of Parliament. Mr. Forster was not responsible for the Land Act; he had the conduct of the Coercion Act of 1881. Then as to the right hon. Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow (Sir George Trevelyan), he was not in the Cabinet; the chief burden fell on Lord Spencer, and the carrying of the Act of 1882 fell mainly on the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir William Harcourt). As to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle, he had not during his term of Office had arrayed against him the phalanx of Nationalist Members, who, whatever might be said against them, were not deficient in Parliamentary tact. They were pastmasters in the art of giving Ministers of the Crown plenty of work to do. He anticipated from his right hon. and gallant Friend the Under Secretary great assistance; in fact, he had already given great assistance, particularly in connection with the Local Government Board. But, in his opinion, it would conduce to the proper administration of business in

Ireland that there should be a Gentleman with a distinct official position on the Local Government Board of that country. The Chief Secretary would still be President of that Board, which, unfortunately, he was not able to attend. But next to him in authority would be the Under Secretary, whose duty it would be to go into the vast mass of important details, and who would be responsible, at the same time, to Parliament and to the Chief Secretary. This change alone ought to secure the general acceptance of the Bill.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby) said, he must strongly protest against the creation of this new Office. The House of Commons always looked with jealousy on a proceeding of this kind.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR explained that he ought to have stated that the Local Government in Ireland permanently consisted of three Members. It was proposed to abolish one of these offices when a vacancy occurred, which would make a saving of £1,200 a-year.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT said, he thought it singular that at a time when the Chief Secretary truly said he was heavily burdened with work in fighting the Coercion Bill through the House of Commons an unpaid Under Secretary was appointed. Now, when it was the great claim of the Government on the country that there was to be a Session without Irish legislation, a paid Under Secretary was to be appointed. This was not a position which would commend itself to one's common sense. The Government had done what was called inserting the thin end of the wedge last Session. That was a curious phrase, for he never heard of inserting the thick end of the wedge. It was very like the system which he thought had disappeared from the administrative system of this country. In former times unpaid *attachés* used to be appointed on the ground that they were not good for much, and so did not get any pay. After a time it was said that those gentlemen had done good work and ought to be paid. The Government had pledged themselves to the eyes that they would not appoint a paid Under Secretary, and certainly if one was not wanted last year he was not wanted now. The right hon. Member for Newcastle said that quite as much work had to be done in his time. He did not want to make invidious comparisons; but from 1880 to 1885 the work was at least as heavy as it was now. In Mr. Forster's time, when an Arms Bill had to be carried, no new Office was created; but a Cabinet Minister, who happened to be himself, took charge of the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman had spoken of the activity of the National League Members; but the Government of 1880 had to face all that and more. They had to face the opposition of hon. Members now sitting below the Gangway and that of the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), who gave the Bill what he called "a parting kick." Thus the right hon. Gentleman had no case whatever for going contrary to the pledge of last Session. But the right hon. Gentleman said that he was going to make this Gentleman the second in command over the Local Government Board in Ireland. They had heard a great deal about local self-government for Ireland. The people who were not Home Rulers were all for local self-government—similar, and to use the phrase of the noble Lord opposite, "similar and simultaneous," institutions in Ireland. The Unionists were all for local self-government. The plan of the Government for carrying out this policy was the appointment of the right hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet, who was an Irishman by birth; but had been unable to find an Irish constituency to return him. A more complete mockery of the promise of local self-government could not be imagined, and he, for one, protested strongly against the Bill now before the House.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) said, the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury had got up immediately the Chairman left the Chair, and on the ground that the course was unusual, asked Irish Members not to oppose this stage of the Bill. They had already given the Government one stage of the Bill when pressed to do so; but what happened when a Bill similar to this was introduced in the case of the Secretary for Scotland? That Bill was opposed by Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, now of Teheran and elsewhere, in conjunction with the noble Lord the Member for Paddington, the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) and other Conservatives. The House attended at a morning sitting to-day for the purpose of considering the proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the conversion of Consols, and that business having been practically unopposed, the Government had taken advantage of there being no other Business on the Paper to suggest that the present Bill should be allowed to pass without protest. He wondered the right hon. Gentleman had not moved the Closure of the debate, but there being no other measure on the Paper, had that been done, hon. Members would have gone to the Reading or Dining Room, and there would have been an interval until 9 o'clock. When the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland got up he had expected that he would have begun his statement with an explanation with regard to the question of non-resignation. It was understood last year that if the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet received a salary he would have to resign his seat, but it did not suit the Government that he should resign, and so it was stated that he was to receive no salary. The Act of Anne provided that no new Office or place of profit under the Crown should be created without the resignation followed of the Member appointed to it. And it was the argument last year of the late Attorney General the Member for Hackney (Sir Charles Russell), that even the acceptance of Office by the right hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet without salary vacated the seat. Although there might be a question or controversy on that point he (Mr. T. M. Healy) submitted that the practice and precedent of Parliament had always been that, even in the case of an unsalaried Office, there should be resignation. That was the case with the Member for Leeds (Mr. H. Gladstone) who vacated his seat on acceptance of the Office of a Lord of the Treasury. But the Office of the Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, which was an absolutely new Office created last year, they were told, did not vacate the seat of the right hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet, who was to receive a salary of £1,000 a-year. Since the Union there had been no such thing as a Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle (Mr. John Morley) had read from *Hansard* the statement of the First Lord of the Treasury that the right hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet would get no salary; and not only was that the impression on the minds of Irish Members and Members on that side of the House, but it was the impression on the mind of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet himself, who had announced to an assembly of Licensed Victuallers at Margate, that the Irish Members were living on the savings of the Irish servant girls, and that he, an Irish gentleman, was doing the whole work of Under Secretary for nothing. He had shown that it was the construction placed on the arrangement by the First Lord of the Treasury and the right hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet himself, that there was to be no salary attached to the Office, and they were therefore now met by a complete change of front on the part of the Government. From the Union to the present time no one had dreamt that an Under Secretary was required, or that the Chief Secretary could not do the work of his Office without a coadjutor; but it seemed now that the Chief Secretary required assistance; and who was the coadjutor that had been chosen? He could have understood the selection of a man who was in some sympathy with the aspirations of the Irish people, or of one who would be on friendly terms with Irish Members, because although it had not been the case for some years in that House, previous Governments had been able to find judicial officers connected with the administration in Ireland who had been on such terms with them and the vast body of the Irish people. This had been the case with Mr. Law and Mr. Johnston, and even under a Conservative Government Irish Members had not been on unfriendly terms with Mr. Gibson or with the present Solicitor General for Ireland. When there was so large a choice, it was unfortunate that a gentleman so obnoxious and so repugnant to the Irish people should have been appointed. But above all things, the Irish people hated a turncoat, and the best evidence of the fact that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman was a turncoat was to be found in a letter which he wrote in the year 1870 to *The Nation* newspaper, in which he said—

> "Mr. O'Neill Daunt, in his letter in your last issue, has well described my position. He repeats what I stated in a speech made during my canvass, which speech was, of course, unknown to him, and an argument that I used in proof of my sincerity—namely, that by throwing myself into the ranks of repeal, (not of local government or Home Rule)—by throwing myself into the ranks of repeal I had cut myself adrift from all English parties—Whig or Tory, Conservative or Radical, as no English Government could think of offering place or pension, were I disposed to accept it, of any kind, or to a man who had publicly proclaimed himself in favour of Irish Home Rule as opposed to English misgovernment."

He thought the Government might have found, if they had been willing to go to the North of Ireland, some Gentleman who would not have been personally offensive and obnoxious to Gentlemen below the Gangway on that side. He did not think even the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson) had ever called the Representatives of Ireland "the scum of the swill-tub of Ireland," which was one of the flowers of rhetoric of which the Under Secretary was the sole inventor. He said, therefore, that the Government had made this appointment as offensive and obnoxious to the people of Ireland as it was possible to make it. The Government had on former occasions refused to appoint Members for the North of Ireland to some offices, because, as they said, they would at once be met with the argument that those Members were Orangemen. But he asked if that objection did not lie against the right hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet? Not only was the right hon. and gallant Gentleman an Orangeman, but he had boasted in a public speech that he had gone down to the County of Roscommon and founded a lodge there, and that he had introduced Orange principles into the county. Then, again, the Government might say they could not appoint a Member for Ulster because it would be said at once that he was a landlord and a rack-renter. But was there anyone who had so black a reputation on this ground as the right hon. and gallant Gentleman? They were told by the First Lord of the Treasury that they were to have an opportunity of discussing the life and adventures of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman at a later stage. He was glad of that. In the meantime he pointed out that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman having been taunted with joining the Nationalist Party, and had his platforms stormed by the Whigs in Dublin, went down to Longford and put forward his claim on the popular party there; then he went to Roscommon, where he issued an address which was not sufficient; and Patrick Egan, the Treasurer of the Land League, went to him and wrote for him a second address, which was posted on every wall of Roscommon, and it was never denied that Egan paid the expense for printing and posting the bills. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman then went to Sligo, where he was proposed by the Very Rev. Canon McDermot, and so strong were the pledges he gave to the Nationalists, that he was returned for Sligo unopposed. After this, the first thing he did was to go into retirement for a couple of months, and although he had pledged himself to his Sligo constituents to remain independent of English parties, yet when he came into the House of Commons, to which he was introduced by two Tory Members, one of whom was Lord Claud Hamilton, he took his seat at once upon the Tory Benches. There he had seconded Mr. Butt's Home Rule Motion in 1877, but immediately ratted from his Party, although he had been Secretary to the Home Rule Conference of 1873. The Government had, therefore, selected a man for Under Secretary to whom might be applied, with a slight variation, the words of Moore with regard to Sheridan—namely, that "he had run through each mood of the lyre, and was master of all;"—"Lyre," of course, spelt with a "y." This was the gentleman who had been adopted as the spokesman in that House of the Irish Government. He had touched on the political record of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman to some extent, but not as fully as they should do later on when they had the opportunity for examination and inquiry which the First Lord was so anxious to afford; but, he asked, was there ever the record of any gentleman being appointed Privy Councillor with such antecedents as those of the present Under Secretary for Ireland? He did not see why they, who had been denounced by him as "the scum of the swill-tub of Ireland" and the receivers of the dollars of Irish servant girls, and the dupers of the Irish people, should go at the right hon. and gallant Gentleman with gloves off. The right hon. Gentleman's (Mr. John Morley's) plea for an "amnesty" for past utterances of Irish Nationalists had been ridiculed by the Tories, and why should they expect more delicate handling when they gave no quarter themselves? Irish Members had been in prison under the Coercion Act; he forgot what he had been put in for, but he knew it was for something not very clearly defined; and several of his hon. Friends, among them the Member for Clare (Mr. Cox) and the ex-Lord Mayor of Dublin (Mr. T. D. Sullivan) had been imprisoned for offences in connection with speeches or under the Press Clauses of the Act; but was there any Irish Members down to the gentleman who had been sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, who could be charged with a single thing of which he need be ashamed? The Government had searched every incident of their lives, but what had they been able to cite against them? What, however, was the case with the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet, who last year declared in the House that if he had met Mr. Weldon he would have had the first shot at him, and who had been sentenced by a London Magistrate for acts in connection with a place which was happily no more—namely, the Cremorne Gardens? It was the purist Conservative Party who appointed this Gentleman, and yet their supporters and the right hon. Member for Central Birmingham (Mr. John Bright) declared that any connection which Irish Members might have with the Irish Government would be an insult and outrage to the Queen. This Gentleman was first made by Her Majesty Lord Lieutenant of a county in Ireland; he was then made a magistrate, then a Privy Councillor, and, finally, he had been placed over the destinies of Ireland as Under Secretary for Ireland and President of the Local Government Board. Under the circumstances he asked the House whether it was not natural that Irish Members should protest against the appointment of a gentleman of this character to deal with Irish affairs. They found that in every relation of life the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had proved false to the political principles which he had avowed, and as a landlord he had been branded by Court after Court as a rack-renter and extortionist. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman was Lord Lieutenant of the County of Roscommon; he had the appointment of magistrates in that county, and one of the magistrates there was his own agent. The Irish Members had been told that Questions in that House did not need the supervision of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, but that they might be safely relegated to his coadjutor. It was a remarkable fact that the first Question put to the right hon. and gallant Gentleman was not answered by him. He (Mr. T. M. Healy) had put that Question, and it was replied to by the Chief Secretary, and the reason was that it concerned one of the tenants of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, a poor man named Thomas Kevill. This man asserted that he had a right to cut turf in the bog adjoining his holding, and the right hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet, with his packed bench, fined him for exercising the right of cutting turf. The solicitor to the defence raised the question of title, and it was the A B C of Law that when the question of title was raised the matter was beyond the jurisdiction of the magistrates. The bench would not raise the fine so as to give the right of appeal; they fined the man an amount under which no appeal would lie, and he accordingly went to the Court of Queen's Bench, on *certiorari*, where the prosecution was dismissed and the fine reversed. The landlord, the present Under Secretary, was told by the Court that he should bring an action of trespass against the tenant. That action had never been brought, but Thomas Kevill incurred £18 costs in order to reverse that fine of 2*s.* 6*d.* or 5*s.* The £18 was put on the miserable resources of this unfortunate occupier, who would have been practically beggared unless a fund had been made up for him. On Monday next he intended to put a Question to the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, and he was anxious to see whether the right hon. and gallant Gentleman would answer it or leave it to be dealt with by the Chief Secretary. The Question concerned the case of a widow on the right hon. and gallant Gentleman's estate in County Longford. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman was to be the Under Secretary for Ireland, he was to have the manipulation of Local Government, and he had at the present moment the manipulation of all the Sub-Commissions in the country, and had practically the fixture of all rents in the country—[*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"]—well, he had through his nominees. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman was to be the sympathetic bosom into whom they were to pour their souls on the question of arrears of rack rents. Referring to the case of widow Flood, of Forthill, County Longford, *The Westmeath Examiner* of the 21st of January said—

> "A tenant, whose rent was reduced last October from £15 8*s*. to £7 was sued for the rack-rent, which drew from the Judge the observation, 'Is it possible, Mr. Bole, that you are going on for the old rent after the Land Commissioners reducing it over 60 per cent. Surely, you do not expect to recover these arrears from poor people.' Mr. Bole's reply was that he had no authority from his employer to wipe out any arrears."

The Judge was the son of Lord Fitzgerald, a Unionist Peer, and Mr. Bole was Colonel King-Harman's agent in County Longford. Mr. Bole had no authority from his employer to wipe out any arrears. The Government wanted to give the right hon. and gallant Gentleman £1,000 a-year by way, he (Mr. T. M. Healy) supposed, of compensation for having had his rents cut down to the extent of 50 and 60 per cent. Under these circumstances he asked English Members——

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.) rose to Order. He wished to ask whether it was in Order to discuss the private affairs of a Gentleman who was to be appointed to an Office, when the question before the Committee was the propriety of having the Office at all.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is no doubt making a very large survey of the case, but I cannot say that he is out of Order. He is discussing the qualifications for the Office of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman who is already discharging the duties of the Office.

MR. T. M. HEALY said, he was sorry that his remarks were so painful to the right hon. Gentleman, and he should have been glad if he could have thrown a veil over the matter. He was quite willing to take advantage of the suggestion that perhaps this matter might be entered into more at large upon a later stage. But when the right hon. Gentleman was so extremely solicitious on questions of Order, might he remind him that upon the Amendment to the Address of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre), which dealt with the question of arrears, the right hon. Gentleman's speech was taken up, not with reference to the arrears question, but in dealing with the proceedings of the Blunt trial and with the murders committed in 1881. The right hon. Gentleman managed to make the murders of 1881——

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. and learned Gentleman must address himself to the question at issue.

MR. T. M. HEALY said, he recognized to the full the protection the Chairman had afforded him in making his statement, and he thought the best way in which he could mark his sense of the way in which the Chairman's ruling had been given would be, in a very few words, more to strictly confine himself to what he might call the principles governing the creation of this Office, leaving the personal appointment and personal reflections to what they were told by the First Lord of the Treasury would be a more suitable stage. Therefore, he thought he had best ask the Unionist Members above the Gangway, and the Conservative Members opposite, to put to themselves this question—Under all the circumstances of the case, is the opposition to this measure a reasonable or legitimate opposition, or one that should be met by brute force in the application of the Closure Rule? He asked if he and his hon. Friends had not made out a reasonable case of objection, not so much to the particular Office as to the incumbent of the Office? Large Constitutional questions arose on the creation of the Office. A large Constitutional question might arise as to whether the right hon. and gallant Gentleman was right or wrong in not resigning his seat last year when he accepted the position. But all these matters were only of historical interest; they were not of that burning interest as to the particular incumbent of the Office. The question he put to English Members was this—when they had a

Gentleman of this kind, whose history, for the moment, they would leave where it stood—when a Gentleman of this character was appointed to answer interrogatories in the House, and to deal with things appertaining to local government in Ireland, what chance had Irish Nationalist Representatives of getting anything like fair or decent justice? The argument of the Government was that they wanted extra help, because they desired to do the work of the Irish Office better. The Irish Office, they said, was undermanned, and they had made this appointment because they desired that Irish Questions should be more thoroughly dealt with. That was a fair proposition for debate; but its *bonâ fides* could only be tested by having regard to the character of the Gentleman appointed. Was it reasonable to suppose that if he put a Question with regard to arrears, with regard to the working of the Land Act, with regard to rack-renting, with regard to evictions, with regard to any one of these things which formed, to a large extent, from an agrarian point of view, the core of the Irish Question, he would get a proper reply from such a man as the right hon. and gallant Gentleman? He saw sitting opposite one of the largest landowners in the South of Ireland, the hon. Gentleman the Member for Huntingdonshire (Mr. Smith-Barry), a Gentleman who had never had any difference with his tenants, and a Gentleman against whom no personal accusations had been made. There were dozens of English Gentlemen with Irish experience who might have been appointed to the Office, and who might have been supposed to throw themselves sympathetically into this work. But what had the Government done? Whereas for centuries Irish Secretaries had been Englishmen or Scotchmen, the first infusion of Hiberian blood into the Irish Office took the shape of the appointment of the most obnoxious Irishman existing in the four Provinces of Ireland. He had never joined in the complaint that Irishmen had not been appointed to the Office of Irish Secretary. If they had to carry on government in Ireland by English prejudices, it really made very little difference whether they had Englishmen, Scotchmen, Welshmen, or even Hindoos in the official positions; they would be equally unsympathetic and equally ignorant. The Irish Secretary (Mr. A. J. Balfour) came over to Ireland with nothing against him but Tory prejudices—the prejudices of his birth, training, and education. He had not the native virus; but the Gentleman appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary was a man who had boxed the compass of Irish politics, who had tacked and sailed under every political flag, and who, in addition, was the most obnoxious man connected with Irish affairs at the present day. Could the Irish Members be expected to submit tamely to conditions such as these? In conclusion, he invited English Members to test the working of the Crimes Act and of the Land Act, to test the working of Irish Local Government by the appointment of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet. He asked them if they could go to their constituents and say they were working Ireland thoroughly and squarely and working it in the interests of the Irish people, and feel in their hearts at the same time they were uttering sentiments which were true. He ventured to say that if they took a ballot amongst the Nationalist Party as to who was the most obnoxious politician in Ireland, 999 out of every 1,000 votes would be recorded for the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet. The hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson) had humour, and if there was anything Irishmen were fond of it was a little fun. When they were attacked by the hon. and gallant Gentleman they could always laugh at his jokes, although those jokes might hurt some of them. But whoever heard of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet making a joke? From every conceivable point of view the right hon. and gallant Gentleman's appointment was hostile to every feeling and fibre of the Irish nature. Looked at in any way they liked he offered to this measure the strongest opposition that it was possible for a man to offer. He thought the Government might have acted reasonably if they required additional support and power. They did not require additional support and power, but they wanted to add one more brand to the burning that was crackling under the Irish pot; they wanted to add one more thorn to those in the Irish side; they wanted to add one more aggravation to the aggravations the Irish people had to bear, and they had succeeded in this by the appointment of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said, he did not propose to detain the Committee at any length. He only wished to say that he had made up his mind to vote against this Bill at every stage. In half-a-dozen sentences he would explain to the Committee the reasons which influenced him. He positively objected to reinforce the ranks of Dublin Castle officialism in this way. Land Commissioners had been appointed and others were about to be appointed. What were the tenants to think when they found the right hon. and gallant Gentleman (Colonel King-Harman) with his hands on the springs of the machinery of Dublin Castle? He said deliberately on behalf of his constituents that they viewed this appointment as an open declaration of war, and as their Representative he should oppose it.

Mr. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.) said, he desired to offer one or two suggestions which would relieve the Government of their difficulty and the House of the consumption of a large amount of time, to say nothing of the charge upon the public purse. He was astonished to hear the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland say that the work in Ireland was too much for him alone, because he had noticed of late an increasing tendency on the part of the right hon. Gentleman not only to manage the affairs of Ireland, but to manage the affairs of Scotland also. They had at least two hon. and learned Gentlemen sitting on the Government Bench who were well able to take care of the affairs of Scotland, and who were paid for doing so, and he suggested as one means of getting out of this difficulty that the Irish Secretary should attend to Irish Business and that the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor General for Scotland should attend to Scotch Business. It was a most remarkable fact that although they had a very able hon. and learned Gentleman in the Solicitor General for Scotland, he (Mr. Hunter) did not think he had ever heard that hon. and learned Gentleman speak upon Scotch matters, of which he, no doubt, knew a great deal, but he had heard him speak upon Irish affairs about which he, no doubt, knew nothing. There was another way in which this difficulty might be got over. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary said, and of course he could not contradict him, that he was not able to discharge the duties of his Office alone as all previous Chief Secretaries had been able to do. That must arise either from a want of capacity or a want of industry. He thought he would have the assent of the right hon. Gentleman when he said that he was at least as capable as any of his Predecessors, and he was not sure that the right hon. Gentleman would not agree with him if he went further and said that he was even more able than any of his Predecessors. If, therefore, considering that there had been no enlargement of the duties of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, that they were precisely the same duties as those discharged by other Chief Secretaries, the right hon. Gentleman found himself unable to do the work, it must be from a lack of industry. He had great sympathy with lazy men, but he was bound to remember, in the interests of the taxpayers, that the right hon. Gentleman received £4,500 a year, and a residence in Ireland, which was maintained by the public for his sole enjoyment. What he submitted was this, that if the right hon. Gentleman found it necessary to employ an assistant, his object might be gained by a devolution of his salary which should be in exact proportion to the amount given to the assistant. He protested in the interest of the taxpayers against this additional sum being cast upon them upon grounds that were totally insufficient.

Mr. PICTON (Leicester) said, he rose merely for the purpose of asking seriously whether they were not to have any reply whatever from the Government Bench to the exceedingly grave charges that had been made by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy)? He thought that, apart altogether from the indisputable humour and brilliancy of the invective of the hon. and learned Member, the hon. and learned Member had established, on very good evidence, charges which ought to be answered before they proceeded any further with this business. Why was not the right hon. and gallant Member (Colonel King-Harman), who was most concerned, present to answer for himself? If he had so little confidence in the justice of his own claims as to shirk the answer necessary to the charges which he must have known in his conscience would be made against him in this House, why did not his patron and protector answer for him, or why did not some other Member of the Government answer for him? The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary rose to protest against the introduction into the discussion of what he called the "private affairs" of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman his assistant. Private affairs! which concerned the cruel treatment of a poor tenant of a bit of bog in Ireland. Private affairs touched the springs of all public affairs in Ireland. Private affairs had been the secret of all public misery in Ireland. He did not feel competent to enter into the details of the question, and did not rise for the purpose of doing so; but he earnestly hoped that some reply would be made to the charges which had been levelled against the right hon. and gallant Gentleman (Colonel King-Harman). Right hon. Gentlemen upon the Government Bench very much deceived themselves if they supposed that no effect was produced by appeals to the English people such as had been made by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for North Longford. The English people were slow; but little by little an impression was being made upon the hearts and consciences of the people of England, which would result in the throwing off altogether of the yoke of injustice, which would become more intolerable to them than it was to the Irish people. It was nothing less than a scandal that an appointment like this should have been made by the Government. The appointment revolted against all the best feelings, not of the Irish people only, but of the English, Scotch, and Welsh people as well, and the Government would find it out. It was monstrous that they should be called upon to go to a vote in this matter without any reply whatever from the Government Bench.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said, the hon. Gentleman the Member for Leicester (Mr. Picton) asked why the Government made no reply to the speech delivered by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy), a speech which for quality and style of Parliamentary eloquence appeared to commend itself to the hon. Gentleman. He (Mr. A. J. Balfour) did not think he had ever heard a speech in the House of Commons which was a greater violation of every canon of good taste than the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman, and that was the reason why he had not risen to reply to what the hon. and learned Gentleman had said. The hon. Member for Leicester had asked why the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet (Colonel King-Harman) was not in his place to reply to the charges which had been levelled against him. He (Mr. A. J. Balfour) did not send out to his right hon. and gallant Friend to tell him that there was a personal attack being made upon him, because he thought that the attack was wholly unworthy of any notice. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for North Longford made a speech which he (Mr. A. J. Balfour) understood, from the ruling of the Chairman, was perfectly in Order. Though it was perfectly in Order, it was, by the admission of the hon. and learned Gentleman himself, in no sense relevant to the creation of the new Office, which was the subject which principally concerned the Committee at the present moment, but simply related to the merits or demerits of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman who would perform the duties of the Office. The personal attack, the character of which he had sufficiently described to the Committee, consisted, so far as he could recollect the details, of accusations against the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet, not made for the first time, but which had been over and over again refuted. It had pleased the hon. and learned Gentleman to rake up every story, true or false, every accusation which malignance had been able to invent during the last 20 years, to throw at the head of one of the most honourable and distinguished Gentlemen who ornamented this House. It would be wholly unworthy of the debates in the House of Commons that any more detailed, any more prolonged or serious reply should be given to those accusations than he had now made.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) said, he had no doubt that hon. Members on that side of the House would agree that no sort of reply had been made by the Chief Secretary for Ireland to the very strong case made out by the hon. and learned Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy). The hon. and learned Gentleman did not rake up every story told during the last 20 years against the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet. Had he done so, his speech would have occupied a considerably longer time. He (Mr. J. E. Ellis) noticed that the First Lord of the Treasury had just returned to his place. He might perhaps be allowed to express the hope that in this very serious matter—namely, the appointment of an Assistant to the Chief Secretary at a cost to the taxpayers of £1,000 per annum, the right hon. Gentleman would allow the Committee free discussion and not resort to the force of the closure. He would not detain the Committee, but only say, speaking as an English Member of Parliament and as one who probably passed more days in Ireland during 1887 than the Chief Secretary for Ireland himself, that he endorsed all that was said by the hon. and learned Member for Longford as to the manner in which the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet was viewed by his fellow-countrymen. One could not go into County Roscommon or into the district about Boyle without knowing what the people thought of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman. It was a scandal and a reproach to Her Majesty's Government that they should propose to the House of Commons the appointment of such a man.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.) said, it was a singular fact that the Chief Secretary for Ireland had acknowledged to-night that his Deputy, the man who stood between him and the administration of local government in Ireland, was the very man who, in this House in 1886, took upon himself the task of moving the rejection of the Poor Law Guardians Bill, a Bill which was to amend the law relating to a certain system of local government in Ireland. The ground on which the right hon. and gallant Gentleman opposed that Bill was that he desired to see the power possessed by *ex officio* Guardians in Ireland preserved intact. When such was the view of the one who was put forward as the figure-head of the future local administration in Ireland, the Irish people saw plainly that Her Majesty's Government had not even the pretence of sincerity in their profession of a desire to administer fairly local government in Ireland. It was said that this Office was being created with the view of a better discharge of the duties of the Chief Secretary. If the appointment of an Assistant would tend to a more faithful discharge of the right hon. Gentleman's duties, no one would venture to oppose the creation of the Office; but, as a matter of fact, they were in such a position that they had to deal with the incumbent of the Office. They knew already the article they had to deal with. They knew what they were to pay for, and who, in Heaven's name, could grumble at their opposition when they found that the article was spurious? The right hon. and gallant Gentleman (Colonel King-Harman) represented to them the Grand Jury system of Ireland in its most odious form; he represented the present magisterial system and the present monopoly of power by *ex officio* Guardians. In addition to this, the right hon. and gallant Gentleman was notorious for his rack-renting capabilities. It was, therefore, absurd for the Government to think they would in any way ease the friction in Ireland by the appointment of this Gentleman to an onerous post in the House of Commons, which carried with it practically the Presidency of the Local Government Board in Ireland. Furthermore, the right hon. and gallant Gentleman would occupy a prominent position in connection with the Prisons Board. Were they to have a rack-renter of the tenants of Ireland answering Questions put in the House concerning the grievances of those tenants? Was the same man to be not only their political opponent in the House, paid for his position, but possibly their defamer in the country, and also their gaoler when they asserted the rights of the people? The Chief Secretary for Ireland certainly had very important duties to perform if he would perform them. What was alleged in Ireland was that the right hon. Gentleman performed only the vicious part of his duties, leaving the useful part of them undone. It was believed in Ireland that it was the right hon. Gentleman's presence at the only meeting of the Local Government Board he ever attended which caused the dismissal of the doctor who was imprisoned under the Coercion Act. There was a singular fact in regard to Dr. Hayes, of Tralee. An hon. Member of the House was prosecuted under the Crimes Act for certain proceedings on Dr. Hayes' estate, and the doctor was asked by the Local District Inspector to give evidence that he was intimidated. Dr. Hayes refused to do this; and upon his refusal the prosecution was abandoned, until the Government thought fit to revive it, when the doctor swore that he was never intimidated; that, so far as he knew, none of his people were intimidated, and that he was quite willing to leave to the hon. Gentleman prosecuted the settlement of the whole question. A few days afterwards application was made for the sanction of the Local Government Board to the appointment of Dr. Hayes to a certain position; but the Board, who had never in its history refused an increase in the salary of a medical officer, refused it in the case of Dr. Hayes. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary was the Head of the Local Government Board, and he was present at the meeting at which the application was refused. If the statement was true that the work last Session was too heavy for the right hon. Gentleman, what was the answer to it? They were over the work now. It had been ostentatiously proclaimed from the Front Bench that there was to be an un-Irish or a non-Irish Session. When they wanted help on the Irish Question they got it very readidly. In the great debate on the introduction of the Crimes Act one of the most eloquent and effective speeches delivered was that delivered by the Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson), who was believed to have nothing to do but to lend a loyal hand on the Irish Question. Then, there was the Civil Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett), who had been able to find time to go to Ireland to enlighten the people upon questions which concerned themselves. Surely, the Civil Lord could be called in to lend a hand occasionally to the Government; it would not be a great strain on him, even in conjunction with his own duties, to do so. The Government, on their own showing, had no need of further help. Certainly, it was most odious to the Irish Members that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman (Colonel King - Harman) should read out to them the answers to their Questions. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman had no personal knowledge on the Questions put to him; and, owing to the character he enjoyed, it was impossible the tenants of Ireland could place any reliance on the answers or even the promises which he gave. He and his hon. Friends not only objected to the creation of the Office of Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, but they objected, and they had shown very good reasons why, to the right hon. and gallant Gentleman being chosen to fill the Office. Reference had been made to their feelings towards hon. Gentlemen opposite; but he believed there was no one who sat upon the Ministeral Benches whose appointment could be so offensive to them as that of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet. Why did the Government not choose, if they were bound to appoint someone, a Conservative Gentleman representing an Irish constituency? What was their idea with regard to future administration in Ireland? Were hon. Members to judge it by the appointment that had virtually been announced to-night? Having made this appointment, would the Government go to the country with the profession on their lips that the people of Ireland and England were to be governed by the same laws? In one sense he was not sorry the Government had put up the most hideous figure-head they could possibly get, because their action would show to the people of England how just and reasonable was the protest of the Irish Members against the system of administration in Ireland. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman was a magistrate——

MR. WILLIAM HENRY SMITH rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put accordingly, "That the Question be now put:"—

The House *divided:*—Ayes 190; Noes 130: Majority 60.—(Div. List, No. 34.)

Question put,

"That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of a Salary to the Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland."

The House *divided*:—Ayes 182; Noes 132: Majority 50—(Div. List, No. 35.)

It being after ten minutes to Seven o'clock, the Chairman left the Chair to report Progress.

The House suspended its Sitting at Seven of the clock.

The House resumed its Sitting at Nine of the clock.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

HOUSE OF LORDS.—RESOLUTION.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton), in rising to move—

"That, in the opinion of this House, it is contrary to the true principles of representative government and injurious to their efficiency that any person should be a Member of one House of the Legislature by right of birth, and it is, therefore, desirable to put an end to any such existing rights,"

said, it had been pointed out to him that these words might include Her Majesty, which, of course, was not intended; and he should, therefore, instead of "a Member of the Legislature," say "of one House of the Legislature." They had been engaged in democratizing as far as they could the Commons branch of the Legislature; but all their efforts would be abortive, all their efforts at Parliamentary reform would be illusory, if they allowed side by side with that House a Legislative Assembly to exist which in its nature was aristocratic, and which had a right to tamper with and veto the decisions of the nation which were registered by the House of Commons. He (Mr. Labouchere) would not enter into the question whether it was desirable to have one House or two Houses; but if it was desirable to have an Upper Chamber Members of that Upper Chamber should be composed of men who were responsible for what they did to the country. The functions of this Upper House should be limited to altering any little error of detail the Commons had made, or throwing out a Bill on some fundamental Constitutional question on which the country had not been consulted, or which it might be fairly imagined the country did not approve of. Did it limit itself to these functions? Was it entirely free from Party and personal motives? All would agree this was not the case. How was the House of Lords composed? Members of the House of Lords were neither elected nor selected for their merits. They sat by the merits of their ancestors who were rotting in their graves; and if we looked into the merits of some of those ancestors we should agree that the less said about them the better. The House of Lords consisted of a class most dangerous to the community—the class of rich men, the greater part of whose fortunes was in land. It was asserted of them that the House of Lords was recruited from the wisest and best of the country—that the House was so wise and so good that in some mysterious way they were able to transmit their virtues to future generations *in sæcula sæculorum*. The practice in the selection of those Gentlemen was not quite in accordance with this theory. They consisted generally of two classes—of those who were comparatively unsuccessful politicians and of those who were undoubtedly successful money-grubbers. He would take a few examples, and as he did not wish to be inviduous he would take them from both sides of the House. They all knew and appreciated Sir R. Assheton Cross, Mr. Sclater-Booth, Sir Thomas Brassey, and Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen. What did they think of these Gentlemen? As Members of this House everybody respected and liked them; but they were looked upon merely as decent sort of mediocrities of the ordinary quality which was converted in course of time into administrative Ministers. Take another class. Why were brewers selected as Peers? Simply because they of late had accumulated very great fortunes by the sale of intoxicating liquors, and for no other reason. The names of Guinness, Bass, and Allsopp had been for long household words in every public-house in the country, but who ever heard of them as politicians? Yes; these

Gentlemen were considered to be the very best men in the country to be converted into hereditary Peers. Another class who made money were the financists. Lord Rothschild inherited a large fortune, and had increased that fortune, and no doubt spent his money in the most honourable way; but Lord Rothschild did not in the House of Commons in any way distinguish himself. With brewers, when one was made a Peer, another must be made a Peer for advertisement. So with financial houses; when a Rothschild was made a Peer, it was necessary to fish up some one of the name of Baring, and one Baring was converted into Lord Revelstoke—a Gentleman who, though probably eminent in City circles, was hardly known to anybody in that House, and who had never taken part in politics. So much for the composition of the House of Lords. Most Members sat there by right of birth. These were made hereditary Peers on the extraordinary ground that where a man had looked so well after himself he would look after others—a doctrine which experience was against. Of those who were either pensioners themselves, or derived their incomes from accumulations of pensions, or had been placemen—themselves or their wives—there were 189. In any other Assembly such a number of placemen never existed on the face of the globe. Most of these Gentlemen selected courtly employment, which required neither intellect nor learning, because it was well known that any well-trained ape could do the same. He had always thought it most unfair to throw on Her Majesty the onus of these appointments, because when the Civil List was settled a certain portion was allocated for the purpose—should he say—of subsidising these Peers. Therefore, their salaries did not appear in the Estimates, or the House would know how to deal with them. Deducting Representative Peers from Scotland and Ireland, and deducting Members of the Royal Family, and deducting Bishops and Archbishops, he found 470 Peers sitting as hereditary Peers in the House of Lords. He found those Peers had annually distributed among them £389,163, amounting on an average to £820 each—these rich men who would with one accord protest against the payment of Members of that House. These were the rich men who were found at public meetings denouncing Members from Ireland as a wretched crew, because, being mainly poor men, they received enough to enable them to live from their constituents. The Peers were almost as careful of their relations as of themselves. In a valuable publication he saw it put down that from 1874 to 1886 no fewer than 7,000 relatives of Peers had had places of emolument under the Government. Take even 5,000—was it to be supposed that if the Peers were not legislators and able to vote, 5,000 of their relations would be on the country? But they were not satisfied with cash. They were to be pampered with honours to keep the Peerage sweet. In the other House there were 120 Privy Councillors, of whom he ventured to say the majority in that House never heard. Orders had to be found for those Gentlemen. Almost every one of them had a decoration. There were three decorations which were absolutely made for Peers and for no other body—the Garter, the Order of St. Patrick, and the Thistle. Walpole declined a decoration, "because" said he, "why bribe myself?" Lord Melbourne said of the Garter that its pleasing feature was that there was "no nonsense of merit about it." An impression existed that Private Bill legislation was more independent in the House of Lords than in that House. He did not think it was. A great deal depended on railway matters, and Sir S. Laing had pointed out the other day that the landed aristocracy had obtained for land sold to railroads, £50,000,000 more than it was worth. He (Mr. Labouchere) found that there were far more Railway Directors in the House of Lords than in the House of Commons, and why? Because railway legislation came before the House of Lords, and the great magnates of railroads thought it desirable that as many as possible should be encouraged to be on their side. So much for the personal independence of the House of Lords. No men looked better after the class interests of those to whom they belonged than the Peers. They were great landowners; 16,000,000 acres belonged to them. Yet our land laws were a disgrace to the country, and were tainted at the present day with feudalism. They were in favour of the great owners of land, not the tenants or labourers. Why was there, let him ask, a difference made between real and personal estate? Why should the Death Dues be 3 per cent on personal, and only 1⅞ per cent on real property? He suspected that would be the case so long as the House of Lords existed. In 1880 a Liberal Government brought in a Bill to give compensation for disturbance in Ireland. The majority against the Bill in the House of Lords was 232. He went into the House of Lords to see the scene. Generally—as they all knew—when an important question affecting the country at large was under discussion, the House of Lords was empty. At this time Peers unknown to the doorkeepers came up in order to vote against the Bill—against anything that appealed to their personal or class interests. Through the injustice done to the tenants by this action of landlords the Liberal Government was obliged to adopt a pernicious coercive policy. Was the House of Lords in harmony with the people on general questions—in, say, religious legislation? Most of the Peers were members of the Church of England; they desired that the Church of England should be absolutely supreme, and that any other Church should be treated with intolerance. In 1832 they opposed a Bill to throw open the Universities to Dissenters; in 1834 they threw out a Bill to allow 20 persons to worship in a private house. In 1837 they threw out a Bill to give religious and civil liberty to the Jews. They turned their attention to Church rates, and from 1858 to 1869 threw out Bills to do away with those rates. When at last live Dissenters got their rights, they turned their intolerance to dead Dissenters. In 1873, 1876, and 1879 they threw out Bills for the burial of Dissenters, which were intended to give them the same rights as members of the Church of England. When, four years ago, the hon. and learned Member for East Denbighshire (Mr. Osborne Morgan) brought in his Burials Bill, he (Mr. Labouchere) and others protested against this clause of the Bill. What, said the hon. Member, was the good of altering those clauses, because if he did the House of Lords would throw it out. The right hon. and learned Gentleman emasculated the Bill, and when it went up to the House of Lords they proceeded further to castrate it. They voted against the Ballot, against Municipal and Parliamentary reform, and they did their best against a free and cheap Press by throwing out the reduction of the duty on paper. All these were now by common consent esteemed good measures. Whenever they had appealed to the people against the House of Commons they had invariably been wrong and the country pronounced against them. The House of Lords were far too shrewd to make these appeals too often. They crippled with pernicious Amendments all Liberal Bills. No Liberal Bill passed through the House of Lords as a Liberal Cabinet would have it, so that the Cabinet had to consider, not only whether a Bill would pass the Commons, but whether it would pass the Lords. It was admitted that the Peers were, as a body, Conservative. They were mostly partizans of one Party. They were the servile and submissive instruments of the Tory Leaders, and this was thoroughly understood—that if an obnoxious Bill passed the Commons it would be rejected in the Lords. This had been openly avowed in the case of a Bill of his own. In 1885 when a Bill passed through the House of Commons to throw the expense of Parliamentary Elections on the rates clauses which he inserted were attacked by the Conservatives and talked out on successive nights until he told them that he should continue until 6 o'clock in the morning, and then they saw the cogency of the reasoning. An hon. Member of the Front Bench suggested they should yield because the Lords would throw it out. In *The Times* of October 21, 1887, the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), at Sunderland, is reported to have said—

> "If Mr. Gladstone has a majority he will find it has taken up a great deal of time to get the House of Commons to agree to a new Constitution for Ireland. But the Bill has to go to the House of Lords, and I do not think we need have the smallest doubt, as reasonable people making reasonable calculations, but that the House of Lords would throw out the Bill. They would insist on remitting the question, the plan in all its details, to the judgment of the country. Very well, then the Session of 1889 is closed. Then we come to the autumn of 1889. Now, Mr. Gladstone has always contended that no action of the House of Lords need be final. He would call Parliament together in the winter of 1889, and he would send up the Bill again; and again we must calculate as reasonable people that the House of Lords would stick to their guns and throw the Bill out."—

And here one of those voices which sometimes conveyed a good deal of wisdom called out in the meeting—

> "And that will go on to the millenium."

The Leaders of the Conservative Party did more than this; they absolutely told their followers in this House that they might vote for a Bill which would do them harm, because while that measure would be sure to crush the Liberals in this House, the House of Lords would not use it to crush Conservatism. At the recent Conservative gathering at Oxford, Lord Salisbury said—

> "I have no doubt that the result of a considerable amendment in the Rules of the House of Commons will be to send up from time to time when there are bad Houses of Commons a considerable number of objectionable measures to the House of Lords, and I hope that the House of Lords will not shrink from acting upon its conscientious convictions."

Generally, the main argument in favour of the House as it existed was that it saved the House of Commons from acting *ultra vires* beyond the mandate of the constituencies. No doubt that would be so if the Liberals were in power; but he never heard of the House of Lords applying the same principle to the Conservatives. The control was entirely on one side. The noble Lord opposite had said what would be done if a Home Rule Bill were passed. He said that the House of Lords would throw it out. But a Bill was passed last Session, the Coercion Act, which the Liberals contended was *ultra vires.* The Liberals were of opinion that the Conservatives had got in by assuring the constituencies that they would not pass a Coercion Bill if they had a majority in this House. They did not, because the House of Lords was in confederacy with the Conservative Party in the House of Commons. He had stated how the Conservatives acted as legislators. He had much extenuated and set down nought in malice. This House of Lords was not collectively worse than any 600 men would be. They were *ex necessitate* a Tory House and a House of partizans. The assertion that they subordinated public interests to their private class and Party interests was merely tantamount to saying that they were human beings. A House of artizans would act on similar principles. There had been many proposals for a reform of the House of Lords. The hon. Member for the Southport Division of Lancashire (Mr. Curzon) had an Amendment on the Paper. If he had known the Forms of the House he would have known that he could not put it. He (Mr. Labouchere) had read an article recently on the House of Lords in which it was said that all reforms must come from the Conservatives. That showed that the reform was intended not to weaken but to strengthen it as a barrier against the democracy. The Tories professed to place confidence in the people. They called themselves Tory Democrats. But that confidence only lasted so long as the people acted in accordance with their wishes. The Tories were greatly in a minority in this country. They were in a minority now. The Tories wanted the House of Lords to control this foolish people, yet there were Liberals who were ready to whitewash this Tory sepulchre of Liberal measures. The hon. Member for the Arfon Division of Canarvonshire (Mr. Rathbone) had put an Amendment on the Paper of this nature. He proposed to maintain but reduce the hereditary element in the House of Lords and to add some elective Members. He objected to this method of giving weight in a race, to use a sporting metaphor. If a Liberal measure were accepted by the elected Members of the House of Lords, it would still be thrown out by the hereditary contingent. At present a Liberal Ministry could force their Bills through the House of Lords by a threat of a creation of new peers to swamp the Upper Chamber, as was done at the time of the first Reform Bill. He had read an article in *The Times* in which the hope was expressed

> "That the Ministry will give some intimation that they are willing to consider a policy which may deprive destructive Radicals of a dangerous weapon."

That was the excellent advice which his hon. Friend seemed anxious to follow. The avowed object of such plans was to render nugatory the wishes of the Radical masses of this country. The same article said—

> "It would be improper in either House to take the initiative in calling for organic changes in the other."

This claim for the divine right of hereditary legislators far exceeded anything that was ever put forward in favour of the divine right of Kings. The House of Commons had as much right to abolish hereditary legislators as it had to do away with the representation of towns which used to return Members to that House. It was said, however, that the House of Lords would not assent, and that a revolution would be necessary. Nothing was a greater mistake. There was a Constitutional means of meeting this difficulty by the creation of new peers, and the threat of this course was sufficient in 1830 to bring a strong man like the Duke of Wellington to accept the popular verdict. By the Constitution Her Majesty could act and speak only on the advice of her Ministers, and a few days ago he should have said that it would have surprised him if Her Majesty had ventured to express an adverse opinion on anything her Ministers had done. The objection that it would be necessary to have a revolution to put an end to hereditary rights of legislation was, of course, absurd. As to the further objection that if they did not sit in the House of Lords they would sit in the House of Commons, why should they not do so, if the people chose them? He would like to see the best men of all classes on each side in the House of Commons; and he would much prefer to listen to the Marquess of Salisbury in the House of Commons; indeed, it would be better that he should, as Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, sit in that House than that he should be obliged to answer for himself through the mouth of another; and the Representatives of the people would have more control over him. He (Mr. Labouchere) should resist all schemes for reforming the House of Lords which involved the maintenance of the hereditary principle, the mixing up of the hereditary and elective principle in one Chamber, or the selection by the Lords of their best men to form an hereditary assembly. In all these proposals he scented the snake in the grass, because their object was not to weaken, but to strengthen the House of Lords as a Conservative body rampart against the democracy of this country. Speaking on this subject at Oxford, the Marquess of Salisbury said he was sceptical as to any reform of the House of Lords being carried, because there was only a certain amount of political power, of which the House of Commons had five-sixths, and if the House of Lords were reformed, it would compete more thoroughly with the House of Commons. The House of Commons was quite acute enough to see this, and therefore no essential change was likely to be made. These observations he commended to the attention of the followers of the noble Lord. His Amendment went to the root of the evil. He at first thought of including Bishops; but he struck them out, on the principle of *de minimis non curat lex.* If the hereditary principle were done away with, what the right hon. Member for Birmingham called the incestuous union between the spiritual and the political would cease of itself. His Amendment did not prejudice the question whether there ought to be two Chambers or one only. Personally he was in favour of one, but those who voted with him need not necessarily support him on that particular point. Other countries which had two had simply followed our example, and it was a mere result of chance that we happened to have two. If they agreed, the second was useless; if they disagreed the second was pernicious. If the functions of an Upper Chamber were to be properly fulfilled by those who soared above class and Party interest, we must not look for its Members in this world, but we must bring down angels from Heaven; but as that would be difficult, there was only one other alternative. We should also require alternating Chambers—a Tory Upper House to control a Radical Lower House, and a Radical House of Lords to control a Conservative House of Commons. An Upper Chamber was needless in our system; and it was cumbersome as a Court of Revision, whose functions could be discharged by a committee of experts. A second Chamber was not necessary as a means of appealing to the people. He challenged any one to name an instance in which the Liberal Party had passed a measure in which the country did not concur. There had been no case in which it had been necessary for the House of Lords to step in in order to make an appeal to the country. The Liberal Party was in touch with the constituencies, and would not force a measure through the House against the wishes of the electors. He would challenge the Liberal Members who wanted to preserve the hereditary principle to submit the matter to their constituents. No question was deemed more important by Radicals than this of abolishing hereditary legislators. They perceive that the antagonism between class government and national government was becoming more acute every day, and they judged of what the Lords would do by what they had already done. While ready to accept a defeat at the poll they objected—when the verdict of the constituencies was in their favour—to being cheated out of the victory by 500 or 600 hereditary Gentlemen who claimed the right to set aside the will of the Nation. The Tory hereditary House gave to the Conservative Party the same advantage that an ace up the sleeve gave to a gambler, and the Liberals were determined to shake the ace out of the Tory sleeve. The Liberals who favoured the maintenance of the hereditary principle were in reality not Liberals. They gave only lip-service to their principles. These half-hearted Liberals must realize that sham Liberalism was out of date, for the constituencies would not be humbugged any longer. They must realize that the centre of gravity had shifted of late on the side of the House which they sat upon. The Liberal Party had become a Radical Party, one of whose strongest doctrines was the abolition of hereditary legislators. This was illustrated recently in the Dundee Election. There was a competitive examination for candidates. His hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Firth) and Sir Horace Davey were competitors. They were asked whether they would abolish the hereditary principle in the Legislature. The hon. and learned Member's answers were satisfactory. Sir Horace Davey's were not. What happened? That eminent lawyer, excellent man, and good Liberal, was left out in the cold, and his hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Firth) was chosen. He trusted that would be the case with every constituency where Liberals had to choose between a candidate in favour of hereditary legislators being abolished and a candidate opposed to that. He would, moreover, impress upon Liberal constituencies being firm in insisting upon their candidates being very specific in their pledges upon this point, and not to be satisfied with vague generalities with regard to it. The question that such constituencies should put to their candidates was, "Are you in favour of abolishing hereditary legislators, root and branch?" And any man who failed to answer that question distinctly ought to be discarded as a Liberal candidate. We had at the present moment an Irish Question, and the Radicals intended to give the Irish Home Rule. The Irish Question meant that local self-government should be given to Ireland, and Liberals intended to do their best to give local self-government to Ireland. We want local self-government not only for Ireland but for Great Britain. What the Castle and the nephew were to Ireland, the uncle and the House of Lords were to England. No proper local self-government could exist in this country so long as an Assembly of hereditary legislators, of rich men, of men belonging to one class, had the right, whenever the country sent to the House of Commons a Liberal majority, to hamper and block legislation. The Conservatives at their meetings always shouted, "Thank God we have a House of Lords." Radicals had no intention to remain any longer supinely like toads under the harrow of the House of Lords. They intended to agitate until they could say, "Thank God we have not a hereditary House of Lords."

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "that" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House, it is contrary to the true principles of Representative Government, and injurious to their efficiency, that any person should be a Member of one House of the Legislature by right of birth, and it is therefore desirable to put an end to any such existing rights,"—(*Mr. Labouchere,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. RATHBONE (Carnarvonshire, Arfon) said, the only complaint he had to find with the hon. Gentleman who moved the Resolution (Mr. Labouchere) was, that he had answered his (Mr. Rathbone's) arguments before he had heard them. He had not the slightest intention of trying to whitewash what the hon. Member called "that whited sepulchre, the House of Lords." All Radicals and all Liberals would agree, and he fancied all Conservatives would also agree, that hitherto the House of Lords had too much dammed up public opinion and discontent in quiet times—that in such times it had opposed legislation in accordance with national feeling only to break down its barriers, and allow a flood of hasty legislation to pour forth in times of excitement. It had been anything but a truly Conservative part of our Constitution, and he should be the last to wish to strengthen it as an opponent to the House of Commons and a barrier to the deliberate wishes of the nation. On the contrary, he thought the reform of the House of Lords was necessary, and that the continued existence of that Chamber was impossible unless it could be made to represent, as the House of Commons did, the deliberate will of the nation. If it were Representative, it might be made to strengthen the House of Commons very materially, not that he supposed it would ever enjoy the same kind of power as that House. His hon. Friend (Mr. Labouchere) treated everybody as a bad Liberal who did not insist on nothing less than the abolition of the House of Lords; but he (Mr. Rathbone) would remind the hon. Gentleman of the story of the Irishman who said there were 15 reasons why he did not eat his breakfast, and the first of them was because he could not get a breakfast to eat. That was a good reason in the case of the Irishman, and a similar kind of reason might be used in regard to the abolition of the House of Lords. He did not think they would be able to get abolition, at any rate within any reasonable period. His object in rising was to move as an Amendment to the Motion of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Northampton to leave out all the words after "in," in line 1, and insert—

> "Order to improve the legislative efficiency of the House of Lords, it is desirable that it should not rest solely on right of birth, and not be responsible to or in sufficient touch with the people; and that a combination of the hereditary and representative principle would preserve what is valuable in, and increase the usefulness of, that branch of the legislature."

Few men, he presumed, would be found to argue that, granting that a Second Chamber was necessary, they would, if they had to begin again, select in these days the hereditary principle as that on which to found it. But, in the Motion which the hon. Member for Northampton had brought forward, he (Mr. Rathbone) thought he had hardly taken account of the very strong characteristics of the British nation. The British people seldom tried to destroy an institution which had long existed, and to which in times past they had owed considerable benefits, without first trying to amend it; and he did not think the hon. Member would persuade them in the present day to act on any different principle as regarded the House of Lords. Therefore, as they were all agreed that their Legislative Constitution had not worked as efficiently as it ought to do in order to meet modern requirements, he would ask the House to consider whether it would not be well to try promptly to reform the House of Lords and make it, as he believed it might be made, a very useful and efficient part of the Constitution. Few countries had thought it desirable to proceed without a Second Chamber; and, even after they had altered the Rules of Procedure in the House of Commons as proposed, he could not see much chance of their having too much legislative power to meet all the complicated wants of modern civilization. They knew that there was in the House of Lords considerable legislative talent which received its education in the House of Commons. There was a strong feeling, moreover, in the country in favour of the hereditary principle, founded on the services which such families as the Russells, the Cavendishes, and the Howards had rendered as popular leaders; and he thought it would be most practical to see whether we could not in some way use this talent, and avoid arousing against us a strong popular sentiment, and try to carry the House of Lords with us in their own reform. Lord Salisbury himself had used words respecting the American Senate, showing that he coveted for England a Second Chamber as powerful and efficient, and we might with advantage see whether the principle which had been so successful there could not be adapted and applied to the improvement of the House of Lords. He presumed that what they wanted a Second Chamber for was, in the first place, to help efficiently in the practical work of legislation, so that laws might be more carefully and promptly considered than they were now; and, in the next place, that it should represent the mature and permanent opinions of the country, and give time for reflection in periods of great excitement and violent agitation. That was what the Senate of the United States had done very successfully. It was purer from corrupt influences, more powerful and more useful than the House of Representatives, and still more so than the State Legislatures which selected it. Now, could not they in some way use the principles which had produced that result, and, while retaining what was useful and noble in the House of Lords, make that Assembly still more useful, and therefore still more truly noble, in the best sense than it was now, by providing for it division of labour, increased means of political information, and increased sense of responsibility? He thought anyone who had really studied the question why the House of Lords had not hitherto been made more useful than it had been, would have come to the conclusion that it was from the want of these advantages that its comparative uselessness had arisen, and that it had become merely a drag on the House of Commons, and a Court to register its decrees. To bring that home to anyone who had watched with anxious interest the course of legislation it was only necessary to follow the stages of a Bill in the two Houses, and to see why, with all the legislative capacity which the Upper House contained in many of its Members, its legislative work had to be done all over again when brought to the House of Commons. No Bill came in a practicable and workable shape from the minds of its promoters or hands of its draftsman. It was printed, debated in the face of the public, sent down by hon. Members to those of their constituents who were interested in the question, and Members received in reply all the practical information that practical men interested in the subject possessed, and with the aid of such information the Bill was amended and thrown into practical shape. This was what happened to a Bill in the House of Commons; but Members of the House of Lords had not volunteered to undertake the duties of legislation, and some of them had neither taste nor fitness for the work. They were responsible to no electors. No individual lay Peer was directly connected with the inhabitants of a locality, or with those interested in any trade, manufacture, or profession in a way to authorize and induce them to communicate with him as to the defects of any Bill, or the best mode of making it more complete. He was not in any effective manner responsible to or in touch with those for whom he was legislating. Hence the Lords rarely debated openly in detail any of the ordinary measures brought before them; the Committee stage of a measure was usually settled by a conversation across the Table; and the Bill, not having received that consideration and consequent amendment by suggestions from the experience of the country at large to make it practically workable, the whole work necessary to bring it into practical shape had to be done over again in the House of Commons. Consider for a moment what powers and qualifications the House of Lords possessed, in what respect it was deficient, and what was necessary to make it the most powerful and efficient and useful Second Chamber in the world, as the Senate of the United States is, he believed, in the opinion of those who had most studied the subject, including the Prime Minister himself. The House of Lords possessed enormous historical dignity, and, in spite of its blunders of late years, still had a strong hold on the feelings, or if they liked on the prejudices of the English nation; and it contained now a minority certainly, but still a considerable number of men of great ability and trained to political life who might be made very useful as legislators; but, moreover, a large number of men who, having no taste and no faculty for legislation, were nevertheless very useful in their own localities as Chairmen of Quarter Sessions and of Boards of Guardians, and partakers in county and local administration generally. What they wanted was division of labour in the House of Lords, leaving to Peers their rank and dignity, but providing that, when sitting as a Legislative Assembly, only those Peers should vote who possessed the necessary qualifications to enable them to legislate usefully and with effect as Members of a Second Chamber. This division of labour was already in practice adopted as regarded the legal or judicial Business of the House of Lords; for the general Rule that no one but Law Lords voted in judicial cases had never been deviated from for more than a century; but something more than custom would be required to make such a Rule effective in relation to the legislative portion of the work of that House. To enable and induce the

Lords to be an effective part of the Legislature they ought to feel practically responsible to the country for the due performance of the work for which they had been selected and which they had agreed to undertake. They ought to represent the matured opinion of the country so as to provide against hasty, unwise legislation during periods of excessive excitement. They ought to bring the House of Lords into connection and touch with the different parts of the country. He assumed, what he believed to be the case, that the country, as a whole, was not prepared to do without a Second Chamber. But they wanted a Second Chamber somewhat in accord with the gradual, steady, irrevocable movement of national sentiment and thought. Would not those objects be attained by allowing the Peerage to retain all that it now enjoyed of rank and precedence, but appropriating to its diverse functions the diverse abilities of its members; by leaving them free, if they so preferred, not to undertake the duty of making laws; by providing that all Peerages of the United Kingdom, as did then Peerages of the Scotch and Irish Kingdoms, should confer, not a seat in the House of Lords, but the capacity of filling such a seat; by providing that the House of Commons should elect those Peers who should actually vote, but not elect them all at once or in the ordinary manner, but each successive House of Commons electing by the cumulative vote one-third of their total number, say 50 Peers, who should sit during three Parliaments, a period, on the average, of 15 years? Power might be reserved to the Ministers to nominate a limited number of eminent Civil and Military Servants of the Crown to sit in the Upper House, either for life or for a term of three Parliaments. The present Law Lords would, of course retain their seats. And, finally, in order to connect the House of Lords with the nation and its whole system of local government, the Chairman of the New County Boards, when these last should have been established, might be added to the number of the Members of the Upper House. As the United Kingdom contained 114 counties, of which some might be grouped and others divided for purposes of administration, they might compute the number of Chairmen as about equal to the number of counties. Adding these to the 150 elected Peers, and making a moderate allowance for life Peers and for Law Lords, we obtained a total of about 300 Members. More numerous a Second Chamber could scarcely with advantage be; and if the nominal Upper House of that day exceeded that figure, its working numbers fell far below. By this mode he believed they would retain every Member of the House of Lords who really took any practical interest in legislation in the present day; and, either as elected by the House of Commons, or as Chairmen of County Boards, they would have undertaken the work of their House, and would feel responsible for its performance. The House of Lords would represent the deliberate opinion of the nation spread over three Parliaments. The hereditary Peers would still be in the majority; but they would be Peers who had sought election, and voluntarily assumed the responsibility of the work; while the Upper House would be brought into connection and communication and touch with the localities through the Chairmen of County Boards. On this system they would have adopted what was valuable in the constitution of the House of Lords itself, in the House of Commons, and in the Senate of the United States. They would have a Body representing the deliberate opinion of the country, and not open to be influenced by gusts of passion. The only objection that he had heard to his plan was that it would make the House of Lords too powerful, and that they might fear clashing with the House of Commons. His answer to that was, he thought, simple and conclusive. The Senate of the United States had been made more powerful than the House of Representatives, yet there was no clashing there. The Senate had been not only by far the most powerful, but the wisest and most useful part of the Constitution of the United States; and if the power of the House of Lords should overshadow that of the House of Commons—which he did not believe would ever be the case—it would be because, like the Senate of the United States, it had been more useful and wiser than the more popular Assembly; and power arising from beneficent action and wisdom was that which they ought not to fear, but rather to covet; and, after all, it could only be because the

House of Commons ceased to be in the future what it had been in the past—the first Legislative Assembly in the world—and it could only by remaining so degraded for some considerable time lose the tremendous hold that it had upon the affections and confidence of the country. He was not wedded to any particular part of the scheme he had laid before the House. He had suggested it as one way in which he thought the defects of the House of Lords might be remedied, and that Chamber made a powerful and beneficent Legislative Body. Some had proposed that the selection of the legislative part of the House of Lords should be left to the House of Lords itself. That would, no doubt, be a great improvement upon the present House, brought up to vote on most important issues, which a great many of its Members had not taken the trouble either to understand or debate. The most valuable part of his suggestion was that it would bring the Chairmen of County Boards into the House of Lords, elected for, say, seven or ten years; as that really would do something towards bringing the House of Lords, into connection and touch with the country, and would, moreover, have the most beneficial effect in dignifying our whole system of local administration, by making the head of the local government of each county a dignified Member of the Legislature.

MR. CURZON (Lancashire, Southport), who had an Amendment on the Paper, to leave out all the words after "opinion of this House," in line 1, and insert—

> "The strengthening of the Legislature is to be sought, not in the abolition, but in the reform and modification of the hereditary principle in the composition of the Upper House of Parliament,"

said, that he was not able to compete with either of the two hon. Members who had spoken before him that night, because the first of them was a conscious and the second was an unconscious humourist. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) was a man of facetious and fanciful temperament, and no institution was safe from his quips or his satire. There was nothing that he touched which he was not capable of turning into laughter, and they had an admirable illustration of that in his speech that night. The want of seriousness on the hon. Member's part was but the reflex of wha were his real feelings on the matter. Would it be believed that less than two years ago the hon. Member for Northampton, that arch-democrat, actually contemplated without alarm the contingency of becoming a Peer himself?

MR. LABOUCHERE: I must protest against what the hon. Gentleman says. I never for a moment contemplated so horrible a contingency.

MR. CURZON said, he was very glad to hear that disclaimer, because he had derived his information on the point from a quarter of unquestioned veracity—a journal called *Truth.* The hon. Gentleman stated, in the autumn of 1886, writing in that paper, that he would almost consent to become a Peer himself if only to gaze on a picture by Mr. Herbert, which hung in one of the ante-chambers of the House of Lords. He (Mr. Curzon) confessed that he was a little surprised at that admission of weakness on the hon. Gentleman's part, and he could not understand how an hon. Gentleman like him could contemplate becoming a Member of an Assembly where the exploded principles of order and decorum still prevailed, and it was only when he himself went and examined the picture in question that he was able to account for the hon. Gentleman's curious remark, because he found that the subject of the picture was that of Moses breaking the tables of the law. The present Motion of the hon. Member was, he must observe, one of a very restricted application. It applied by its terms only to those Members of the House of Lords who were legislators by right of birth, and the hon. Gentleman who spoke last appeared to fancy, judging from the terms of his Amendment, that the House of Lords consisted entirely of such Members. Now, he (Mr. Curzon) denied the hon. Member's assertion that the House of Lords rested solely on the right of birth. There were many Members of the other House to whom the terms both of the Motion and of the Amendment did not apply. First, there were the Archbishops and the Bishops, 27 in number, who sat, not by right of birth, but because they represented their dioceses. Then there were three Law Lords, who sat not by right of birth, but by the terms of an Act passed in 1876. Then there were the 16 Scotch and the 28 Irish Representative Peers, who sat in virtue of their election by their Peers, and who were in the strictest sense of the term Representative and not Hereditary Peers. Further, there were in the House of Lords no fewer than 70 Peers who had been ennobled themselves and who sat there, not by right of birth, but by right of the patents granted to them for services they had rendered to the State. The whole of these classes, amounting in all to 144 persons, were excluded from the terms of the Motion of the hon. Member for Northampton, which only dealt with the remaining proportion, or about three-fourths of the House of Lords; so that they arrived at this ridiculous conclusion —that if that Motion were adopted, and the forms of the Constitution permitted it to be carried into effect—which, fortunately, they did not—they would abolish three-fourths of the existing House of Lords, but would still have a body of over 140 Members, the composition or the political complexion of which would not be more satisfactory to the hon. Member than those of the present Upper Chamber. The first and main argument of the hon. Member for Northampton was that the House of Lords was not a representative institution, and that it was contrary to the principles of representative government that an institution so composed should exist. Now, he took leave to point out that representative government was not a complete or an exhaustive account of the Constitution under which we lived. We had representative institutions, but all our institutions were not representative. Some of them were based on a directly opposite principle. There was the Throne, which was not filled on the Representative principle., but on the principle which the hon. Member for Northampton had so severely condemned, the hereditary principle. And if the hon. Member levelled a blow at the hereditary principle in the House of Lords, he (Mr. Curzon) wanted to know why he did not also strike at the hereditary principle in the Throne. Then there was the Cabinet, which might be described as the ruling body in this country. It was not framed on the representative principle; it was nominated by one man, the Prime Minister, and the Prime Minister himself was not selected on the Representative principle, but was nominated by the Sovereign. Finally, they had the Judges, who were not elected, but nominated, and were not responsible nor removable. To return to the direct charge that the House of Lords was not a Representative body. The hon. Member himself said it was exclusively representative of one class only, that of the land. Well, he conceived that the possession of landed estates, and the stake in the welfare of the country which that possession involved, were no mean guarantees for the possession of the qualities of independence and patriotism so essential in a Second Chamber. The hon. Member had drawn a somewhat fantastic picture of the House of Lords, sketched in a highly sensational and imperfect style of art. He had described it as being composed for the most part of unsuccessful politicians and of successful money - grubbers. [Mr. LABOUCHERE: The recent additions.] Now, in its actual composition it contained 23 Cabinet Ministers, 4 Viceroys of India and 6 of Ireland, 4 Governors General of Canada, 8 Governors Principal or Colonial Governors, and 6 Ambassadors or ex-Ambassadors. In addition to these there were in the House of Lords two ex-Speakers of the House of Commons, eight Judges, 78 officials who had held posts under the Government exclusive of the Royal Household, 120 Privy Councillors, 157 Peers who had served in the Army or Navy, excluding Yeomanry, Volunteers, and Militia; and, lastly, there were 194 Peers who had satisfied even the stringent rule laid down by the hon. Member for Northampton himself, inasmuch as they had submitted to the ordeal of public election and had passed through the House of Commons. To contend that a House so composed was not a Representative Chamber and was not representative of many and varied interests was an abuse of language; but, at the same time, he felt that the House of Lords might be made much more representative than it was. There were interests which at the present moment were excluded from representation in that House and which might be admitted, and there were interests which were imperfectly represented, and whose representation might be enlarged. There were three classes to whom these remarks mainly applied. First of all, there were the great Dissenting denominations which filled so large a place in the public life of the country, and which at the present moment were almost without representation there. Then there were the Public Services, which trained and turned out a staff of public servants unequalled for efficiency in the world, and whose abilities and experience after they had retired from their professions might be continued in the service of the State. Lastly, there were the Colonists, who were absolutely without representation in the Imperial Parliament. If the House of Lords could be made more representative of these classes and interests he believed that the community at large would approve of such a step being taken. The hon. Member for Northampton complained that there was a permanent Conservative majority in the other House. That was a necessary feature of a Second Chamber. [" Oh!"] There never had been a Second Chamber in the history of the world which did not contain a Conservative as against a Radical majority. They might have representatives of whatever element they pleased in a Second Chamber; but it would be found that a Radical majority if temporarily secured could not be permanently retained, and that the Conservatives would in the long run have the preponderance. There had been 300 creations to the Peerage in the present Reign, and over 200 of these had been the creations of Liberal Prime Ministers. Notwithstanding that the Conservative majority in the House of Lords was stronger than ever. Of the 200 creations, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) was responsible for nearly 80; and yet he (Mr. Curzon) would not hesitate to say that one-half of that number, if not more, would without a qualm of compunction go into the lobby against him. The hon. Member for Northampton was in favour of a single Chamber, because, as he said, we could not possibly get a satisfactory Second Chamber. By a satisfactory Second Chamber, the hon. Member meant a Second Chamber composed of men of his own political complexion. That was not an argument against Second Chambers *per se*, but rather an argument against Radicalism *per se*, and the very fact of the impossibility of keeping a Radical majority alive in a Second Chamber, tend and water it as they pleased, was a proof, not of the unhealthiness of the atmosphere, but rather of the inherent sickliness and decrepitude of the plant. Then the hon. Member trotted out the old and familiar argument which he might describe as the "Financial Reform Almanack Argument," and which was this, that because the Peers received so much annual income in rental, in pensions, or in pay, therefore they must be regarded with suspicion as legislators. He retaliated by regarding the figures of the hon. Member with the greatest possible suspicion. In November, 1884, the hon. Member complained that a certain number of hereditary Peers were owners of 14,000,000 acres with a rental of £9,000,000; while in March, 1886, he stated that the same number of Peers owned the same number of acres at a rental of £12,000,000. The astonishing thing was that this increase was said to have taken place in little more than a year, when every man of sense knew perfectly well that rents had fallen from 15 to 30 per cent. The figures of the hon. Gentleman were totally and hopelessly inaccurate. The hon. Member also referred to the matter of salaries paid to Peers. He (Mr. Curzon) would point out that salaries were paid to Cabinet Ministers even if they were Members of the House of Commons, and the salaries included those paid to Viceroys and Ambassadors and others in the service of the State in different parts of the world. He fearlessly asserted the principle that the labourer was worthy of his hire, whether Peer or peasant. A Peer was as much entitled to a salary if he happened to be in the service of the State as the doctor or the barrister to his fee, or the hon. Member for Northampton to the sixpence which a gullible public paid for a copy of *Truth*. The House of Lords did real service in saving the country from the two greatest curses which could befall a nation having a titled order and great commercial wealth —namely, the curse of an aristocracy framed upon narrow lines of caste, and the curse of a plutocracy or moneyed order uplifted and sustained by wealth. While the nobility of other countries had, under the blighting influence of caste, shrivelled into a dry and sapless trunk, the nobility of England had struck new roots into the soil, and recruited itself by fresh impulses from the source whence it sprung; and while other countries had suffered from making money and not birth the test of rank, we had been free from the degrading taint of Mammon worship in England. In its Constitutional aspect the House of Lords acted as a counterpoise to the unbalanced weight of a democratic and Representative Chamber, and that that counterpoise was needed had been admitted by all save the section represented by the hon. Member for Northampton. The House of Lords was also a means of referring hastily conceived and premature measures to the people, and as such it had been a democratic rather than an aristocratic agent. Then it was said that the House of Lords had never done any good thing; that it had only indulged in massacre and mutilation. His estimate of good and evil no doubt differed materially from that of the hon. Member; but if the hon. Member asked what good the House of Lords had done, he asked in return what evil had it not prevented being done? How often had not the House of Lords taken imperfect measures and lopped them into shape? How often had it not stood between the country and the impetuous amateur legislation in which Gentlemen like the hon. Member were apt to indulge? The hon. Member appealed to recent history. He (Mr. Curzon) remembered the Session of 1886, after the Home Rule Bill had been thrown out, when most Members had gone to their constituents, and there remained in the House only a small band of faithful Radicals under the lead of the right hon. Members for Edinburgh and Stirling. At that time a number of hasty and ill-considered measures were hurried through the House of Commons, and, but for the House of Lords, they would have now been the law of the land, and the reputation of hon. Members opposite as legislators would have been even lower than it was. The hon. Member spoke of the selfishness of the House of Lords. Was it no proof of self-abnegation and the preference of patriotism to Party interests that a body like the House of Lords, composed almost entirely of Protestants and Churchmen, should have passed a measure like the disestablishment of the Irish Church, or that a House composed, as the hon. Member complained, of landlords should have passed with so little friction the Land Acts of 1870 and 1881, and a measure like Lord Ashbourne's Land Purchase Act? If nothing but evil had come out of the House of Lords, how was it that so many great and good measures were inscribed on the Statute Book? We had heard a great deal of fifty years of Liberal progress. Surely the House of Lords deserved some share of credit for contributing to that progress by the measures it had passed? But on that side of the House they did not argue that the House was free from blemish, otherwise they would not have put on the Paper proposals for its reform. There were bad points in the House of Lords, but they were points which the hon. Member had to a great extent overlooked. The House of Lords was not sufficiently Representative, and might be made more Representative than it was. The Prerogative of the creation of Members of the House of Lords was one of the highest which was vested in the hands of the First Minister of the Crown. It was a Prerogative which ought to be exercised with discretion and restraint, but these qualities had not been uniformly displayed, for promotion had not always been in recognition of services rendered to the country, but had too often been the reward of purely political services. Then the hereditary system prevailing in the House of Lords was compulsory, not permissive. The eldest son of an hereditary Peer succeeded to his title, and was bound to take it, whether he was willing or not. There might be a man more fit, but the man less fit could not be relieved of his duties. There were evils in the House of Lords, but there was a growing desire in both Houses to remedy those evils, and therefore he had ventured to put on the Paper an Amendment which anyone could understand, and that was more than could be said of the hon. Member's Amendment. The Amendment which he had put on the Paper asked the House to assent only to the reform and modification of the hereditary principle in the composition of the House of Lords. We ought to be content with small and tentative measures to begin with, but without some modification of the hereditary principle you could not proceed any distance in the direction of reform. Impulse might be communicated from without, but the action must come from within.

No help could be expected from members below the Gangway, as the House had heard from the hon. Member. He hoped, however, that among other sections of the House, both Conservative and Liberal, a more moderate and statesmanlike spirit prevailed, because if there was one attitude which was likely to be more fatal than what he might call the unblushing nihilism of hon. Members opposite, it would be a stubborn opposition to reform such as might have been expected from the Conservative Party in old times, but was not to be expected from them now. In process of time there might be a combination of all Parties and of both Houses of Parliament to carry out this reform. But whatever might be done in the direction of reform, he (Mr. Curzon) hoped that an institution which had existed in this country so long, and on the whole had justified itself to the sound judgment of the nation, would not be hastily and hurriedly swept away in obedience to a mandate from Northampton.

Mr. FIRTH (Dundee) said, he did not propose to detain the House at any length; but there was one question propounded by the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Curzon) which he desired to answer. He would not follow the hon. Member in his suggestion that the action of the House of Lords in 1868 in regard to the Irish Church Act, and in regard to the Land Act of 1870—three vital clauses of which they struck out, necessitating the Act of 1880—was patriotic. Neither did he propose to combat the hon. Gentleman's proposition that the House of Lords was the embodiment of the religious life of country. The one question he wished to answer was why the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) did not include in his Motion the Crown as being one of the hereditary institutions of the country. He apprehended that the reason why his hon. Friend did not include the Crown was that that institution did not, in matters of legislation, present itself to the country in the same position as the House of Lords. Although, technically, the Crown possessed the right of veto, they did not find it exercised that right. On the other hand, they did find the House of Lords constantly dissenting from measures passed by the Representative body of the people. It seemed to him that the Crown presented an example which, if the House of Lords were to follow it, would offer the readiest and easiest solution of the question they were now considering. His hon. Friend had pointed out that the peculiar characteristic of our Constitution was its adaptability to the circumstances of the time. If the House of Lords were to adapt itself to the growing democratic spirit of the age by following the notable example the Crown had set, the difficult problem they had before them might easily be settled. During the Tudor and Stuart dynasties, the Crown exercised direct control, and direct control was exercised by William III. There came a time in the reign of the House of Hanover, when the King could not speak English, and his first Minister could not speak French, and the control had to be exercised through the medium of conversation in Latin. The control became, in consequence, less and less. To-day, the Crown was supposed to be the embodiment of the Executive. To-day the Crown was supposed to have the nomination of all officers of the Army and Navy, and to have the control of many affairs, but, as a matter of fact, such rights were not exercised. If the House of Lords followed the example of the Crown and curtailed the control over Bills sent up from this House which it claimed to exercise, the result might be a happy *euthanasia* for that House, and the House might be preserved from attacks to which it was now subject. It had gone to a certain extent in that direction. It had, in the first place, ceased to meet as a body as a Court of Supreme Appeal on questions of law, though it was entitled to do so if it thought fit. It had also ceased to make the claim, although it had never specifically abandoned it, of originating measures of Supply. If it were to go on and cease to dissent to the measures passed by this House on important questions like those affecting the franchise of the people, and so forth, it might still have a long life; but if it persisted in opposing the will of the people, its life might come to a more speedy end than some hon. Gentlemen opposite imagined. It seemed to him that this was the answer to the question, How it came to pass that the Crown was not included in this proposition? He hoped the House would accept the proposition of his hon. Friend (Mr. Labouchere). The time might come when it would be necessary to embody the proposition in an Act of Parliament. He supposed that that was the only way, short of a Revolution, in which the proposition of his hon. Friend could be carried into practical effect. Of course, it would be necessary for the House of Lords to assent to such an Act; and, whether that assent would be obtained except by the method which was adopted in 1831, when, as they knew, two Ministers of the Crown went to Windsor with 80 creations of Peers in their pockets, he was not prepared to say. Very probably there would be an Act of Parliament of that kind unless the House of Lords accepted the suggestion, which had been made in all good faith, that they should gradually let go those prerogatives which, technically, they possessed, whenever they conflicted with the will of the people as expressed in this House.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, that after the admirable speech of the hon. Member for the Southport Division of South-West Lancashire (Mr. Curzon), it was unnecessary for him to say a word as to the importance of the House of Lords. He desired, however, to say a few words upon the Amendment he had placed upon the Paper, but which, he understood, it was impossible for him to move. His Amendment was as follows:—

> "It is desirable, with a view to the maintenance of that respect and confidence in which both Houses of Parliament have hitherto been held by the country, that hereditary Members of Parliament who have been convicted of crime, or who have been bankrupt, or whose conduct is of such a nature as in the judgment of their Peers to cause public scandal, should cease ever again to sit or vote or take part in the proceedings of Parliament."

He need hardly say he approached this subject as a strong supporter of the Second Chamber, as a believer in the hereditary system to a certain extent. He agreed fully with his hon. Friend (Mr. Curzon) that it was necessary at the present time to consider the reform of the House of Lords in its representative character—to incorporate within it certain Life Members or certain Members who had been not only hereditary Peers, but would sit there as a reward for public services, and who would form a large addition and a great strength to that House. They had listened to a remarkable speech from the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), who, in his usual flippant manner, would get rid of the House of Lords and our great Constitution under which the Empire had attained its present great dimensions. Those hon. Members who believed in the principles of legislation could not suppose that the hon. Gentleman's proposition was really seriously meant. The hereditary body was, without doubt, a body which might be proud of its present position; for learning, for patriotism, and for morality, the House of Lords, the hereditary Chamber, could hold its own. In spite of the fierce light under which it lived, in spite of the fashion which now existed to do the utmost to pervert everything that everybody in any important position did, in spite of the writings of scurrilous newspapers which fastened upon everything that could be made to look bad—which, if they could not make truthful statements which suited their purpose, did not hesitate to invent them—in spite of all those who envied the House of Lords, and who pandered to it, and then scandalized it behind its back, the House of Lords could hold its own for all the quality of greatness. He asserted that there were very few who could throw stones at the House of Lords; certainly it was not this House which could do so. But while he said this, he fully agreed that this was not enough, and the Amendment which he would have moved, had he been able to, bore upon the subject. If there was one bad man in a body of men immense injury was done to the whole body. The public fixed upon the one individual and the *prestige* of the body was degraded and their influence seriously impaired. There was no doubt that cases of scandal influenced and damaged the position of the whole House. It might be true that Society very easily forgot scandal. It might be true that men who had behaved in a disgraceful way were again received into Society. Such men might be permitted to enter political clubs, but there was no doubt that through their scandalous acts they did permanently injure the position of the House to which they happened to belong. There had been cases of great scandal which affected the position of the hereditary Chamber. Members of that House had become bankrupt, and after they had been whitewashed, or whatever the technical term was, had resumed their position in the House. Members of that House had been convicted of serious offences, and after undergoing the punishment inflicted upon them had resumed their seats in the House. Other Members of that House had disgraced themselves by acts which nobody could excuse; but still they continued to sit in the House. It had been said by some papers which had commented upon his Amendment that the House of Commons was not free from scandal. He knew that was so, but it must be remembered that no Member of this House was elected for life. Men were only elected to the House of Commons for a Parliament, and it might be taken for granted that a man who was the subject of a gross scandal was never re-elected. This circumstance was a hopeful sign of the times, for when constituences re-elected Members who had had their characters blasted, the sun of England's greatness would certainly have set. He did not wish to mention any name, but they all knew perfectly well that there was a case some time ago in which an hon. Gentleman, no longer a Member of this House, who had risen to a high position, and who was at the very portal of the very highest place an Englishman could wish to fill, was involved. Every one of every section in the House was very much grieved at the event. What was the result? The constituency for whom the hon. Gentleman had done so much, and whom he had served so long and so well, refused to re-elect him; they preferred to elect a young unknown man. That showed that the House of Commons had the means of purging itself of those who disgraced it in any way; and he had no hesitation in saying that no one would ever be re-elected to the House who had disgraced himself in an open and flagrant manner. If it was the case that constituencies refused to return such men to the House of Commons, how long would the country allow men who had blasted their names to continue to sit in the House of Lords? Let him take the very simplest case—namely, that of bankruptcy. There were cases, no doubt, in which men had become bankrupt through misfortune; but such cases were very rare with Peers. Members of the House of Lords who had become bankrupt had generally become so through circumstances which were not creditable. Could it be contended for a moment that men who had become bankrupt should continue to sit in the House of Peers? It was certain that no hereditary Chamber could possibly last for any great period which possessed such Members, and therefore it was clear that those who really believed in the advisability of extending and strengthening the House of Lords should do their best to lop off its rotten and decayed branches. But there had been cases in which serious crime had been committed by Members of the Upper House. It certainly required no argument to prove that men who had been guilty of criminal offences of this sort should not have the right by birth and for life to continue to exercise the functions of Members of Parliament. He now came to the last class of cases, which was quite as important, but probably the most difficult to deal with—he referred to the men who had been guilty of some act which was disgraceful, but which did not come within the Criminal Code. Surely, men who had been guilty of open and flagrant acts of immorality, and who had been adjudged to be guilty of those acts by their Peers, ought not to be allowed to sit and act as legislators for life simply by right of birth. Was it reasonable to suppose that a man who had figured conspicuously in the Divorce Court should be allowed by right of birth to claim the privilege of sitting and voting in the House of Lords? And was it reasonable that a man who had so misbehaved himself that if he appeared on Newmarket Heath he would be kicked off, should sit and vote in the House of Lords merely by the right of birth? It was monstrous that in the case of urgent Divisions such men should be whipped up by the Party Whips in order to take part in the decision or settlement of some momentous affair of the nation — possibly the question of the Establishment or Disestablishment of the Church. It was often said, "though these men are bad, yet there are many quite as bad in all classes of society;" and, "the only offence of many men is being found out." He did not believe this was so; but even if it were, it did not affect the argument. With what a man was in his private capacity public opinion had nothing to do; his sins when not publicly known were between himself and his conscience; but those men who defiantly outraged all laws of morality clearly should not be allowed to remain for life, by right of birth, Members of the Legislature. Such cases were very few; but that fact made it all the more easy to deal with them; and it was the more necessary, for a few cases were remarked upon and became known to everyone. He would even go beyond the terms of his Amendment. To his mind, any man who had disgraced himself should not only be cut off from taking part in all legislative proceedings, but just as a clergyman was unfrocked and a military officer lost his commission, so he would have such a man uncoronetted. He saw no reason why men who succeeded to the name and position earned by the great deeds of their ancestors should not, when they disgraced their position, be cut off from taking part in the legislature of the country. A man was made a Peer and a hereditary legislator for some great deed; but if he, or any of his descendants, disgraced themselves, there was no reason why the privilege should not be withdrawn from the man who had shown himself unworthy of it. It might be said such a course would be hard on the children of Peers; but it was harder on the country to be obliged to retain men in their position of privilege in spite of any misconduct. It was impossible to suppose that children would be brought up in principles of nobleness and virtue by parents, who openly set at defiance all rules of morality. The only way to keep a hereditary Chamber really in touch and in sympathy with the masses of the people was to lop off these evil members. The maintenance of the House of Lords was of immense importance to the country, and, he believed, that the character of individual members largely affected the character of legislation. Those who studied history knew that the decadence of people had developed from the decadence of individuals, and was most rapid where the disease entered the senate. He hoped that in what he had said he had not wounded any susceptibilities. Example in high places was of great importance. The influence of a hereditary Chamber was very great, and he had no doubt whatever that the fact that a man whose offences were publicly known had, simply by right of birth—regardless of what he might have done—the right for life to the position of legislator, was doing great mischief in the country. He was sure there was nobody who believed in a hereditary Chamber being necessary to the Constitution that did not agree with him. The time had come when legislation should stop these public scandals, and he believed the work could be undertaken by the present Government; and he appealed to the Front Bench to support the proposition that a man who had brought disgrace upon himself by his conduct should not solely by right of birth remain for life a Member of the Legislature, working and making the laws of the country to which he belonged.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I think that there is a general desire in the House that this debate should not be continued at any great length. The speech of the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) appeared to me to be hardly fresh. Although the hon. Member has the gift of brightening his speeches with well-worn jokes and stories which are not new to the House, I felt, while he was speaking, that I was listening to observations which I had heard him make before. The view which the hon. Member takes is that there is really no necessity for a Second Chamber at all. With the frankness which always distinguishes his remarks, he said that he thought a Second Chamber useless; and he implied that the legislative centre of gravity ought to be sought for in himself and the Party with which he is intimately associated. For my part, I think that there are very few persons in this country who seriously believe, having regard to the enormous powers that are vested in the Legislature, that there ought to be no Second Chamber, and that it should be in the power of this Assembly, however representative it be, to institute and carry out by its own vote, in a single Session of Parliament, changes of a vast and overwhelming character affecting the interests of this great nation. The hon. Member's suggestion that a Second Chamber is useless, the centre of gravity being in this House, indicates with sufficient clearness what step he would take if he had the power. The hon. Member's real object is to convert this House into a Convention which would have the right to pass such measures as might be thought expedient by a temporary majority. Nobody, however Radical, excepting the hon. Member himself, will, I think, seriously suggest that the important interests of this country should be intrusted to such an Assembly as that. The hon. Member proposes that the Second Chamber, if retained, should deal with mere matters of detail. He would also, in certain circumstances, allow the reference of greater questions. [Mr. LABOUCHERE dissented.] Then the House of Commons is itself to dispose of every great question as it arises, perhaps under the influence of popular passion or blind impulse. I think it is hardly necessary to appeal to hon. Members not to support a Resolution of so revolutionary a character, which would shake the very foundations of the Constitution. As to the figures quoted by the hon. Member from *The Financial Reform Almanack*, they have been proved by my hon. Friend the Member for the Southport Division of Lancashire (Mr. Curzon) in his remarkably able speech, to be utterly fallacious. Now, Sir, the charge against the House of Lords is that it is a House of partizans. But the House of Lords has been hitherto used to contain a considerable proportion of the Liberal Party, and any Second Chamber would, according to the hon. Gentleman's argument, share the same fate and need to be abolished. The check against ill considered and violent legislation which is secured by a Second Chamber exists in the interests of the country at large, and if it is not so fairly representative as in the view of some of my hon. Friends it might be made, I say that no Second Chamber can long remain deaf to the public opinion of this country, but must advance towards it if that public opinion is consistent with the interests of the country. The remark made by the hon. Member for Southport that the reform of the House of Lords must come from the Conservative Party and from the House of Lords I accept. The assertion has great value, and I earnestly trust will meet a full consideration. It is obvious that any reform must strengthen the hold which I believe the House of Lords has on the affections and sympathies of the great mass of the people of this country, but it must be sent down to us from the House of Lords itself for our consideration. The hon. Member opposite has observed that any reform of the House of Lords would be objectionable, because it would strengthen the position of the House of Lords in the country. I do not speak for the sake of the House of Lords itself, but regarding it solely as a co-ordinate branch of the Legislature with ourselves, I would gladly welcome any reforms which would render that House more fit to fulfil the duties that attach to it as a co-ordinate branch of the Legislature in protecting the interests of the people at large. It is a calumny to say that the House of Lords exists for the protection of certain classes only. The work which the House of Lords has done from time to time affords evidence that that is not the case. A vast amount of domestic legislation with regard to factories, affecting the poor and affecting land, has been done by it, and shows that it has studied the interests of the people at large, and not of the class of which it is composed. The Settled Land Act of Lord Cairns which was passed by him when sitting on the Opposition Benches, was sent down to this House, was accepted by all the lawyers in the House, and passed, I believe, absolutely without debate. I refer to that to dispose of the allegation that the House of Lords is not capable of constructive legislation. The hon. Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley) referred to some circumstances connected with Members of the House of Lords, but I will remind him that there is no body of men among whom some black sheep cannot be found; there is scarcely a family among whom some black sheep may not be found. It can hardly be said, Sir, that the same observation does not apply to other bodies and other associations of men. I should like to refer, Sir, to some observations that fell from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) on the last occasion when he had to meet the Motion of the hon. Member for Northampton. In March, 1886, he said—

> "This great question ought not to be prejudiced by premature discussion. You ought to

leave the whole field open, and you ought not to narrow or restrict the means of future action by laying down beforehand a limited condition that whatever you do you will totally abolish the hereditary principle. I am not going to ask the House to affirm anything about the hereditary principle. I am not myself entirely inclined to its total abolition. . . . But do not let the hon. Member suppose that when he talks of abolishing the hereditary principle he is propounding an opinion which it will be as easy to give effect to as it is undoubtedly popular and musical to the ears of men. . . . But I think the House will do well, while reserving this great subject for a time when its whole power, its whole attention, and its whole freedom can be concentrated upon it—and I am quite certain that when that time does arrive all your means and all your resources will be required in order to deal with it worthily—the House will do well to decline to deal with it in a manner which I think would not be worthy either of the dignity or of the high character of this House, or of the greatness of the subject itself, by laying down a particular opinion in respect of a particular point in the future—perhaps distant—discussion of a great public subject as to which we might find . . . . that such a declaration had fettered us in our freedom of action and made still more difficult a practical solution of the question."—(3 *Hansard*, [303] 48, 49.)

In a Manifesto issued in September, 1885, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian said—

> "I certainly cannot deny that there is a case sufficient to justify important change. Those who hold with Mr. Burke, as I do, that knowledge and virtue alone have an intrinsic right to govern, might desire to constitute a Second Chamber, strictly on this basis. But we cannot in the nature of things exclude the action of other influences, especially the permanent growing and highly agressive power of wealth. Among these secondary influences, as a force congenial to the character and habits of the people, and as a check on other and yet more mixed agencies, I hope that in the reconstitution of the House of Lords, when it arrives, a reasonable share of power may be allowed under wise conditions to the principle of birth."

I recommend these opinions to the consideration of the hon. Member for Northampton. I quote the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman as to the value of the principle of birth, and I find that in his judgment it is valuable as a means of guarding against other influences and other dangers. The right hon. Gentleman referred then to the growing dangers to which even a body situated as this is is open and exposed. He referred to the dangers of the power of wealth in influencing bodies of men even in our democratic Constitution. But there is another danger in which money plays an important part, and that is in political combinations influencing the return of Members to this House, not directly, but by agencies which play on the passions of the people. Those are the dangers against which a Second Chamber, and perhaps a hereditary Chamber, is a safeguard. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that, however strong the House of Commons may be, there are dangers to be guarded against in the passionate appeals made to the constituencies of the United Kingdom by caucuses and by the associations which direct those bodies, and it is against these dangers that the existence of a Second Chamber largely assists us. I earnestly hope that the House will by a large majority reject the Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton. With regard to the other hon. Members who by the Forms of the House have only had an opportunity of stating their views on this subject, I think I may claim the assistance of the hon. Member for the Arfon Division of Carnarvon (Mr. Rathbone). He admitted that the system requires amending, but wishes to improve its practical efficiency. I quite agree that that should be the object in view. I desire that the House of Lords should be as practically useful, as safe, and as powerful as it ought to be, in the interests of the country, and it is on that ground that I appeal to the House to reject this Amendment.

MR. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I think, Sir, that we have heard from the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith) an announcement which will be felt, even on his own side of the House, to be deeply disappointing and inadequate. The right hon. Gentleman tells us that Her Majesty's Government are as anxious as anybody else in the State for such a change in the House of Lords as will promote its real efficiency and strengthen its stability; but that we must look to the declaration of Lord Salisbury as the test and measure of the extent to which Her Majesty's Government are willing to go.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I said "indication."

MR. JOHN MORLEY: As the indication then; I withdraw the words test and measure. Now, Sir, we have abundant means of knowing Lord Salisbury's point of view on this most important question. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) quoted one passage; but there are some words which I should like to read again. Lord Salisbury at Oxford said—"I am very sceptical if any such reform will be discovered"—that is to say, any reform which would not be unwelcome to the mass of the Conservative Party. Then he explained to his followers why he was sceptical as to any satisfactory reform—

> "The reason is that any change in the House of Lords which increases its power and influence in the country, if such a change can be discovered, must do so at the cost of the power and influence of the House of Commons, and you may be sure, therefore, that no such proposed change would ever pass."

That does not show any very brilliant opening for those who desire to see the position of the House of Lords in the State modified or improved. But we have other means of knowing Lord Salisbury's mind with regard to this question, because in a debate in "another place," in answer to a most eloquent, brilliant, and forcible speech from Lord Rosebery, Lord Salisbury expressly declared how far he was then willing to go. He said that he would not go beyond a strictly limited power of creating Life Peers. The absolute number might be limited, or the number to be created in any single year: any other course would be fatal to the independence of the House of Lords. I know Lord Salisbury is apt to move very rapidly; but I believe he still stands at that limit. Lord Salisbury showed the utmost extent to which Her Majesty's Government were likely to go in the path of reform of the House of Lords. I submit that his views as to the extension of Life Peerages will be found extremely inadequate even by his own followers. It amounts to a definite *non possumus.* We know that Lord Salisbury is not in the least degree likely to raise this question. His attitude with regard to the request of Lord Rosebery for a Select Committee made that perfectly clear. I hope, therefore, that the hon. Member for the Southport Division of Lancashire (Mr. Curzon), who made a very ingenious speech, will vote with us, because that vote is the only way of raising the question of reform or change in the House of Lords. I think that the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House has not stated very fairly what the effect of this vote will be. The right hon. Gentleman says that to vote for the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton is to vote for the abolition of a Second Chamber. [Mr. W. H. Smith: Hear, hear!] No such implication is conveyed in that vote. The form of my hon. Friend's Motion does not raise the question of a bicameral or a unicameral system.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: The hon. Member was frank enough to say that that was his view.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I said that my Motion did not in any way prejudice the question of two Chambers.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: We have nothing to do with my hon. Friend's pious opinions. By voting for the Motion we are not committing ourselves to the question whether or not the government of the country should be entrusted to one single Representative Chamber. That question is not raised, and will not be settled by our votes. In voting against the Motion that the Speaker leave the Chair, what I, at least, vote is this—that the time has arrived for the discussion of the whole question. I do not vote, myself, either for or against any of the four proposals on the Notice Paper. They must be considered each on its own merits, and on none of them will this Division be a test of the opinion of the House. The right hon. Gentleman seems to overlook the fact that the right hon. Baronet now sitting next him (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) made, not many weeks ago, a very important, interesting, and, as I thought, from our point of view, a not wholly unsatisfactory declaration of his view, that the present state of things in the House of Lords could not continue; and he used language which goes much further than any declaration that Lord Salisbury has made, and much further than those words of Lord Salisbury which I have just read to the House. I hope that the right hon. Baronet will, at all events, not forget what he said, and that he will use his influence to enlarge Lord Salisbury's hopefulness, and to diminish Lord Salisbury's scepticism.

Now, on the other side, it has been attempted to be shown that the House of Lords is a truly Representative Body, and that, on the whole, the country is indebted to it for a great number of beneficent reforms. Well, I am not going into that old story of "50 years of legislation by the House of Lords." I should be quite prepared, if the time allowed, to go through the legislative performances of that House, and I think it would tell a very different tale from that with which the right hon. Gentleman has favoured us. But that is not the point at the present moment. The point which we have to consider now is, whether the House of Lords is in such a condition, and does its work in such a way, as to satisfy even those who believe in the expediency and the necessity of a Second Chamber? I submit that the most firm believers in a Second Chamber are exactly those who ought to dislike most the present state of the House of Lords, because, in its present position, the House of Lords performs none of those functions which a Second Chamber ought to discharge. It is not a Senate. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to think it was. It is not a Senate; it is a privileged interest. It has no effect on the fate of Governments. It cannot force an appeal to the country. Its Divisions excite no curiosity, because they are a foregone conclusion. Even its debates, remarkable for dignity and decorum, are only interesting as to the academic exercise of individual effort: they give no collective weight. What is the difference between having one Chamber only and having two Chambers, one of which is so utterly weak for the purpose for which it exists? Lord Salisbury said truly that a ricketty parapet on the edge of a precipice was more dangerous than no parapet at all, because you lean against it where leaning means destruction. The House of Lords is not a bridle upon democracy, as the hon. Member for the Southport Division of Lancashire seemed to think. It does not form a centre of resistance to the predominant power in the Constitution. More than that, the House of Lords does not do even the more humble work it might well do. I will give the House an illustration of that from what took place this week. There was before the House of Lords a Bill called the County Courts Consolidation Bill. I am told by those well qualified to speak on it that that Bill is of the greatest importance—that the accuracy of the drafting of that Bill will affect private interests in the most serious way. What happened? In the "other place," where they had nothing else to do, they might have examined the Bill, and brought the minds of many competent men to bear on its provisions. What happened? The Bill was passed through Committee, as far as I can make out, without one single criticism or word on a single clause. That is important as showing that the Second Chamber performs neither the humbler nor the higher functions for which it is upheld. Great changes have been made in this House. It has been three times reformed in 55 years. This extension of the representative principle brings into more direct contrast a Chamber in which there is no direct elective element. In the second place, we have this week completed a change in our own Procedure which is pregnant with momentous consequences. The effect of the change is what? To strengthen the power of majorities in this House. That will bring into still more conspicuous light the absurdity of a system which allows an Hereditary Chamber to deprive the majority of this House, for which you have just been taking new and enlarged securities, of its legislative power. Lord Salisbury has announced, with what I must describe as an excess of rashness even for him, his intention to use the power of the House of Lords for the purpose of overriding the will of this House. ["No, no!"] I hear some Gentlemen say "No." I will read Lord Salisbury's words at Oxford with reference to these very Rules. He was endeavouring to soothe the alarmed minds of his followers, lest, in a phrase used below the Gangway the other night, they might be making a rope tighter round their own necks—

> "I have no doubt the result of a considerable amendment in the Rules of the House of Commons will be to send up from time to time, when there is a bad House of Commons"—that is, a House in which there is, a Liberal majority—"a considerable number of objectionable measures to the House of Lords"—objectionable, that is, to the House of Lords—"I hope the House of Lords will not shrink from acting on its conscientious convictions."

The noble Lord himself—I am not sure whether in the same speech—compared his own position and that of his Party to that of a man on a toboggan. I cannot see how you can reconcile that adherence to conscientious convictions with coming down on a slide. Let Gentlemen not deny that Lord Salisbury—and this is my answer to the First Lord for blaming my hon. Friend for raising the question here, instead of waiting until the House of Lords raised it—has forewarned us that when there is a Liberal majority in this House, in spite of all the pains we have taken to make the House the reflex of public opinion, to give the majority of the House power over its own time and proceedings, all that shall be as naught, and that a Liberal House of Commons shall be overridden. That is a digression, but not irrelevant. The third reason why the substantial limits of power in the House of Lords are undergoing change is, that you are on the very point of extending and strengthening the representative and elective principle in local government. We are moving away in every direction and in every quarter from privilege and from the hereditary principle. I say that weakens the whole foundation on which the power of the House of Lords rests. It is cracking and crumbling in every direction. There is another element of their power which is failing. The basis upon which it has hitherto rested is the territorial basis. They have acquired their power not in a small degree as possessors of the soil. It is certain both from the decline in the value of land, and from the increased facility of alienation, that the territorial basis is disappearing from the other House, and this must contribute to the weakening process which is going on. This weakening of the power of the other House is not due to direct attack from without; it is not due to the spread of democratic or Liberal principles; it is due to changes with which outside influences have little to do. The Amendments to that of the hon. Member for Northampton do not appear to be helpful or satisfactory. One contains an extraordinary proposal which it was hardly worth while raising in a grave Constitutional debate. It is that of the hon. Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley) to this effect—

> "Hereditary Members of Parliament who have been convicted of crime, or who have been bankrupt, or whose conduct is of such a nature as in the judgment of their Peers to cause public scandal should cease ever again to sit or vote or take part in the proceedings of Parliament."

This is to give to a tribunal of Peers the right to take away from a Peer, who, after all, is a citizen, rights which the law of the land now gives him; a close, packed, special tribunal is to override the law of the land. I am against treating Peers better than other people. I should be sorry to vote for an Amendment that treats Peers worse than other people. As to the Amendment of the hon. Member for the Arfon Division of Carnarvonshire (Mr. Rathbone), as it stands, I do not very clearly perceive how it would work. He said he wanted to make the Second Chamber like the American Senate. But the Upper House cannot be made parallel to the American Senate. That Senate has peculiar and large powers conferred upon it. For example, no Treaty is valid until it is ratified by a two-thirds majority of the Senate; and the diplomatic, executive, and administrative officers of the United States Government are appointed subject to confirmation by the Senate. Now, if my hon. Friend knows all that, does he gravely suppose that we are going to pass a Bill which will confer upon noble Lords in "another place" such powers as those? I cannot conceive any House of Commons consenting to any proposals of that kind. The Amendment of the hon. Member for the Southport Division of Lancashire (Mr. Curzon) reads well enough; but I listened in vain with the greatest interest for some suggestion as to how he intends to give effect to his object. He gave us no inkling of his plan. I am not going to detain the House any longer. I have fully explained what we mean by voting that the Speaker do not leave the Chair. By doing that we mean to express our opinion that the hereditary principle has become a question which ought no longer to be neglected by this House. We do not support the proposition of the hon. Member for Northampton out of any childish or dangerous taste for Constitution-mongering. We are not moved by any theoretical or abstract logic; we are moved by the logic of actual experience and of events. We are not arguing in advance of the facts by a single day. Experience shows that along whichever path we may ultimately choose to move in dealing either with the position or the composition of the House of Lords, the first step that we have to take in that direction is to affirm that the accident of birth no longer confers the right to make laws for a free and self-governing people.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON (Lancashire, Rossendale): I shall only trespass for a very short time upon the indulgence of the House, and I should not have risen to intervene in the debate at all, had it not been for the very new and somewhat astounding doctrine and unexpected attitude which has been taken up by the right hon. Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr. John Morley) from this Bench. ["Hear, hear!"] Whatever may be the meaning of the cheers of hon. Members around me, I believe I shall not be misrepresenting the state of the case when I say that I understand that the speech which has just been delivered by the right hon. Gentleman is to be regarded as the official utterance of the official Opposition. [*Cheers and counter cheers.*] Whether that is a fact to be received with cheers or not, I must say distinctly that it is worthy of note as a distinct change of attitude on the part of the right hon. Gentleman. I feel bound to remind the House, in connection with that change of attitude, that a Motion almost similar to that which has now been moved by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) was brought forward about two years ago, when it was strongly opposed by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), who was then Prime Minister, and by the great body of his Party, and was not supported, as far as I know, by the right hon. Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Before the debate concludes, therefore, it is worth while to take notice of this change of attitude, and to endeavour to ascertain, if we can, what it means, or whether it means anything at all. The right hon. Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne says—"We understand the Motion as asserting the fact that the time has arrived when it is necessary to deal with the hereditary principle in our legislative system." But my right hon. Friend has not advanced very far in the elucidation of the subject, and has only given us to understand that he does not commit himself to the Motion of the hon. Member for Northampton. He has also still more distinctly given us to understand that he does not approve of any one of the Amendments placed on the Paper. My right hon. Friend has taken Lord Salisbury to task for the attitude which he has taken up in regard to this question. He has described the length to which Lord Salisbury is prepared to go, and he says that Lord Salisbury's attitude practically amounts to a *non possumus.* But I want to know whether my right hon. Friend has given us any assistance in the solution of this question? Can any hon. Gentleman, after listening to the speech of my right hon. Friend, deduce anything from it, or say whether, in the opinion of my right hon. Friend, there ought to be a Second Chamber at all, or whether, if there is a Second Chamber, it ought to be solely hereditary, or partly hereditary in its constitution? My right hon. Friend has not given us the slightest indication of his opinion on any one of those points, and in these circumstances it seems to me that it is hardly fair on his part to taunt Lord Salisbury for the position of *non possumus* which he alleges he has taken up. My right hon. Friend found fault with the composition of the House of Lords and with the action of the House of Lords in a great many respects; but I venture to ask whether he has given to the House the slightest indication or guidance as to the action which ought to be taken by the country and by the Legislature in regard to the composition of that Chamber; whether he himself tended to the opinion that the House of Lords ought to be abolished altogether, or whether some and what reform ought to be instituted in the composition of the Second Chamber? I have risen, chiefly in consequence of his absence, for the purpose of attempting to defend my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian from the false position in which he is unfortunately placed by his Friends here. I had not had, until a short time ago, the slightest conception that it was the intention of my right hon. Friends sitting near me to alter the course which they took two years ago. I have only just had time to refer cursorily to the speech made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian on that occasion. It seems to me that his arguments were couched in an extremely moderate tone, and were amply sufficient to justify the vote he then gave. I believe the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) has referred to the attitude of the right hon. Member for

Mid Lothian. My right hon. Friend on that occasion said he opposed the Motion

> "On the ground that he had never in his knowledge voted upon a question of importance upon a declaration of abstract opinions in regard to a matter involving deeply the public interest unless he was able to follow up that Resolution by action."

It is true that my right hon. Friend on that occasion drew a distinction between the position of Members of the Government and independent Members, and he allowed that, owing to the peculiar and difficult position in which independent Members were often placed, it might be necessary for them to resort to the method of abstract Resolution. Entirely adopting the principle of the right hon. Gentleman, I am disposed to press it somewhat further than he did on that occasion, and I am inclined to contend rather more strongly than he did for the responsibility which rests on the action of every individual Member of Parliament, whether he be in Office or in an independent position. It appears to me impossible for any Member of this House to give his vote on such a question as this without considering what is the course which he would take himself if he were placed at some future period in power, or if those with whom he is politically connected were placed in power. And I want to know whether, in the speeches which have been delivered to-night, we have had the slightest indication to show what course those who are disposed to support this Motion would be prepared to take if they or their Friends were placed in power? The right hon. Gentleman did not rest his opposition on those grounds alone. He brought forward other, and, as I thought, adequate and sufficient reasons for voting against the proposition. He said that he did not rest his opposition to the Motion on account of the past legislative action of the House of Lords; on the contrary, he took two years ago, as he would probably take to-day, a very unfavourable view of the past legislative action of the House of Lords. He did not deny the possibility or the desirability of the reform of the House of Lords; but he said that such a Motion as this should not pass for those reasons, and that a great question ought not to be prejudiced by premature discussion. The House of Commons, he said, ought to have the whole field before it; it ought not to narrow or restrict its means of future action by laying down beforehand a limit in the sense that, whatever they might do in regard to the Second Chamber, they intended to abolish the hereditary principle. My right hon. Friend said that he was not in favour of abolishing altogether the hereditary principle; and, further, he pointed out that the hon. Member for Northampton, even if he could induce the House of Commons to assent to his theoretic condemnation of the hereditary principle, might find it a much more difficult thing to carry into practice than to lay down in a theoretic manner. I say that, in my opinion, those reasons given two years ago by my right hon. Friend against a similar Motion are absolutely sufficient to justify its rejection on this occasion; and I submit that, with all respect for the ability of the speech of the right hon. Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne, he has not answered one of the arguments adduced two years ago by his present Chief. But I may venture to add that it seems to me, in approaching this subject as we are invited to do by the hon. Member for Northampton, we are not commencing at the beginning. Before the House of Commons passes such a Resolution as this, it ought to discuss the question first whether it desires to retain in our legislative system a Second Chamber or not. If there is any Member or if there are many Members in this House who do not desire to have a Second Chamber at all, no doubt they will support the abolition of the hereditary principle. But if there are many other Members of the House who are going to vote against the Speaker leaving the Chair to-night, and who still think that there ought to be a Second Chamber, but that it ought to be differently composed, then I think it is incumbent upon them, before they condemn the hereditary system, to consider in what way that system is to be replaced, and how the Second Chamber they desire to retain ought to be composed. It is a doubtful question whether there are any Members on this side of the House who desire to reconstitute the Second Chamber in a manner which may have the effect of making it a very much more powerful Assembly than it now is. For all these reasons, it seems to me that we ought, at all events, to reject the Motion of the hon. Member for Northampton. The Motion has been placed in a very inconvenient form before the House. It would be perfectly possible for anyone to resist the Motion that you, Sir, do leave the Chair who intended to support such opposite propositions as those put forward by the hon. Member for Northampton, the hon. Member for the Arfon Division of Carnarvonshire (Mr. Rathbone), the hon. Member for the Southport Division of Lancashire (Mr. Curzon), and the hon. Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley). All these will vote against the Speaker leaving the Chair in the hope that the Motions may be reached. But the House is aware that it is impossible for us, on the present occasion, and probably impossible during the present Session, to discuss adequately the relative merits of these Amendments. The only effect of the rejection of the Motion to leave the Chair will be that a sort of assent will be given to the Motion of the hon. Member for Northampton, and that a very incorrect view of the state of feeling in the House of Commons will be given to the country. Under these circumstances, I think that hon. Members will be well advised if they follow the advice given to the House on a similar occasion by the Leader of the Opposition—who then occupied the position of Prime Minister—and until there is some definite idea as to the reform which the House desires to see introduced in the other branch of the Legislature, to resist the Amendment, which cannot have the effect of leading to any practical reform in the constitution of the House of Lords, but which will prejudge the consideration of the question.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): I will not stand for many minutes between the House and a Division. My noble Friend (the Marquess of Hartington), who has just spoken, has asked what is the meaning of this Amendment, and what is the meaning of the vote which we are going to give. My right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr. John Morley) expressed clearly the view of those who sit on these Benches. The declaration which is to be given by this vote is, whether Members are or are not in favour of a reform in the House of Lords, which reform is to be based upon dealing with the hereditary principle. It is that principle which is challenged in the Amendment, and it is upon that that we vote. My right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne complained of the *non possumus* of the First Lord of the Treasury; but there is a much stronger *non possumus* than that of the First Lord of the Treasury. There is the influence which always emphasizes the *non possumus* of the Conservative Party, and that is the influence of my noble Friend. He does not think the *non possumus* of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House strong enough, for there was a weakness about it; there was an indication of an intention in some circumstances of entering into a reform of the House of Lords. There was no such intention in the speech of my noble Friend in any circumstance. His was a *non possumus* pure and simple of reform of the House of Lords under any conditions and any circumstances. How does my noble Friend argue the question? He goes back two years. [*Ministerial cheers.*] Yes; my noble Friend's progress is always backward. It is a sort of crustacean progress, and my noble Friend represents that element in the Party of progress. Why, the Conservative Party have made great progress in this matter in the last two years, and he is jealous of us, because we have made some progress. There is only one man who will allow no progress, no reform, and I should not be surprised if my noble Friend was to go back half-a-century. That is my answer to my noble Friend. He says we are not even to discuss this question—that men placed in power are not to make declarations, unless they are prepared to give effect to them.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: I did not lay down any doctrine of the sort. I only repeated what had been said by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: If my noble Friend wishes to impress that doctrine upon us who are not in Office, will he not impress it still more upon his right hon. Friend opposite, because the First Lord of the Treasury said to-night that there ought to be a reform which ought to originate in the House of Lords. But what is that but making declarations without being prepared to give effect to them? Is the right hon. Gentleman who leads this House prepared to give a pledge on the lines of action laid down on the part of the Marquess of Salisbury that he will initiate in the House of Lords those reforms which the Conservative Party has declared they are prepared to carry out? If not, what becomes of the declaration which the right hon. Gentleman made to pacify the conscience of his followers? We have now got a very clear issue before us. In spite of all these *non possumus* evasions, from whatever source or from whatever quarter of the House they come, we have brought this matter to an issue on which a vote can and will be taken upon it. The question will be determined by this vote whether you are prepared to enter upon practical measures for the reform of the House of Lords in dealing with the hereditary principle. Upon that issue we are perfectly ready to stand and to meet you, who, having a majority in this House, and a majority in the House of Lords, have got the power to give effect to your declarations. So long as you continue to take the course of making those declarations, and of giving no effect to them, I think the country will judge of the value of them. We, at all events, are perfectly prepared to declare in this Division our views and intentions with reference to this matter.

Question put.

The House *divided:*—Ayes 223; Noes 162: Majority 61.

AYES.

Ainslie, W. G.
Aird, J.
Ambrose, W.
Anstruther, H. T.
Ashmead-Bartlett, E.
Baden-Powell, Sir G. S.
Baird, J. G. A.
Balfour, rt. hon. A. J.
Baring, Viscount
Barry, A. H. Smith-
Bartley, G. C. T.
Barttelot, Sir W. B.
Bates, Sir E.
Baumann, A. A.
Beach, right hon. Sir M. E. Hicks-
Beckett, W.
Bentinck, Lord H. C.
Bentinck, W. G. C.
Beresford, Lord C. W. De la Poer
Bethell, Commander G. R.
Bigwood, J.
Birkbeck, Sir E.
Blundell, Col. H. B. H.
Bond, G. H.
Bonsor, H. C. O.
Boord, T. W.
Borthwick, Sir A.
Bridgeman, Col. hon. F. C.
Bristowe, T. L.
Brodrick, hon. W. St. J. F.
Brookfield, A. M.
Brooks, Sir W. C.
Bruce, Lord H.
Burghley, Lord
Campbell, J. A.
Carmarthen, Marq. of
Cavendish, Lord E.
Chaplin, right hon. H.
Charrington, S.
Clarke, Sir E. G.
Cochrane-Baillie, hon. C. W. A. N.
Coddington, W.
Colomb, Capt. J. C. R.
Commerell, Adml. Sir J. E.
Compton, F.
Corbett, J.
Corry, Sir J. P.
Cotton, Capt. E. T. D.
Cross, H. S.
Curzon, Viscount
Curzon, hon. G. N.
Darling, C. J.
Davenport, W. B.
Dawnay, Colonel hon. L. P.
De Cobain, E. S. W.
De Lisle, E. J. L. M. P.
De Worms, Baron H.
Dixon-Hartland, F. D.
Dorington, Sir J. E.
Dugdale, J. S.
Duncombe, A.
Dyke, right hon. Sir W. H.
Edwards-Moss, T. C.
Egerton, hon. A. de T.
Elcho, Lord
Elliot, hon. A. R. D.
Elton, C. I.
Eyre, Colonel H.
Feilden, Lieut.-Gen. R. J.
Fergusson, right hon. Sir J.
Field, Admiral E.
Fielden, T.
Finlay, R. B.
Fisher, W. H.
Fitzgerald, R. U. P.
Fitzwilliam, hon. W. H. W.
Fitz-Wygram, General Sir F. W.
Folkestone, right hon. Viscount
Forwood, A. B.
Fowler, Sir R. N.
Fraser, General C. C.
Fulton, J. F.
Gathorne-Hardy, hon. A. E.
Gedge, S.
Gent-Davis, R.
Giles, A.
Gilliat, J. S.
Goldsworthy, Major-General W. T.
Gorst, Sir J. E.
Goschen, right hon. G. J.
Grimston, Viscount
Gurdon, R. T.
Hall, A. W.
Hall, C.
Halsey, T. F.
Hambro, Col. C. J. T.
Hamilton, right hon. Lord G. F.
Hamilton, Lord E.
Hanbury, R. W.
Hankey, F. A.
Hardcastle, F.
Hartington, Marq. of
Heath, A. R.
Heathcote, Capt. J. H. Edwards-
Heaton, J. H.
Herbert, hon. S.
Hermon-Hodge, R. T.
Hill, right hon. Lord A. W.
Hill, Colonel E. S.
Hoare, E. B.
Hoare, S.
Holloway, G.
Houldsworth, Sir W. H.
Howard, J.
Howorth, H. H.
Hubbard, E.
Hulse, E. H.
Hunt, F. S.
Hunter, Sir W. G.
Isaacson, F. W.
Jackson, W. L.
James, rt. hon. Sir H.
Jarvis, A. W.
Johnston, W.
Kelly, J. R.
Kerans, F. H.
Kimber, H.
King, H. S.
Knowles, L.
Kynoch, G.
Lafone, A.
Lambert, C.
Lawrance, J. C.
Lawrence, Sir J. J. T.
Lawrence, W. F.
Lechmere, Sir E. A. H.
Legh, T. W.
Leighton, S.
Lewisham, right hon. Viscount
Llewellyn, E. H.
Long, W. H.
Low, M.
Lowther, hon. W.
Macartney, W. G. E.
Macdonald, right hon. J. H. A.
Maclean, F. W.
Maclure, J. W.
Madden, D. H.
Makins, Colonel W. T.
Malcolm, Col. J. W.
Mallock, R.
Maple, J. B.
Marriott, right hon. W. T.
Matthews, right hon. H.
Mattinson, M. W.
Maxwell, Sir H. E.
Mayne, Admiral R. C.
Mills, hon. C. W.
More, R. J.
Morrison, W.
Moss, R.
Mount, W. G.
Mowbray, rt. hon. Sir J. R.

Mowbray, R. G. C.
Mulholland, H. L.
Muncaster, Lord
Muntz, P. A.
Murdoch, C. T.
Newark, Viscount
Noble, W.
Norris, E. S.
Northcote, hon. Sir H. S.
Norton, R.
O'Neill, hon. R. T.
Parker, hon. F.
Pearce, Sir W.
Pelly, Sir L.
Penton, Captain F. T.
Plunket, right hon. D. R.
Powell, F. S.
Raikes, rt. hon. H. C.
Richardson, T.
Ritchie, right hon. C. T.
Robertson, Sir W. T.
Robinson, B.
Rollit, Sir A. K.
Round, J.
Salt, T.
Sandys, Lieut-Col. T. M.
Saunderson, Colonel E. J.
Selwyn, Capt. C. W.
Seton-Karr, H.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H.
Sidebotham, J. W.
Sinclair, W. P.
Smith, rt. hon. W. H.
Smith, A.
Spencer, J. E.
Stanhope, rt. hon. E.
Stanley, E. J.
Stephens, H. C.
Stewart, M. J.
Sykes, C.
Talbot, J. G.
Temple, Sir R.
Tollemache, H. J.
Tyler, Sir H. W.
Vincent, C. E. H.
Waring, Colonel T.
Watson, J.
Webster, Sir R. E.
Webster, R. G.
Weymouth, Viscount
Wharton, J. L.
White, J. B.
Whitley, E.
Whitmore, C. A.
Winn, hon. R.
Wodehouse, E. R.
Wood, N.
Wortley, C. B. Stuart-
Wright, H. S.
Young, C. E. B.

TELLERS.
Douglas, A. Akers-
Walrond, Col. W. H.

NOES.

Abraham, W. (Limerick, W.)
Acland, A. H. D.
Anderson, C. H.
Asher, A.
Balfour, rt. hon. J. B.
Ballantine, W. H. W.
Barbour, W. B.
Barclay, J. W.
Barran, J.
Beaumont, W. B.
Biggar, J. G.
Blane, A.
Bolton, J. C.
Bolton, T. D.
Bradlaugh, C.
Brown, A. H.
Bruce, hon. R. P.
Brunner, J. T.
Bryce, J.
Buchanan, T. R.
Burt, T.
Buxton, S. C.
Caine, W. S.
Caldwell, J.
Cameron, C.
Campbell, Sir G.
Campbell, H.
Campbell-Bannerman, right hon. H.
Carew, J. L.
Causton, R. K.
Chamberlain, R.
Channing, F. A.
Childers, right hon. H. C. E.
Clancy, J. J.
Clark, Dr. G. B.
Coleridge, hon. B.
Colman, J. J.
Conway, M.
Cossham, H.
Cox, J. R.
Cozens-Hardy, H. H.
Craig, J.
Crawford, D.
Cremer, W. R.
Crilly, D.
Crossley, E.
Crossman, Gen. Sir W.
Deasy, J.
Dillon, J.
Duff, R. W.
Ellis, J.
Ellis, J. E.
Ellis, T. E.
Esslemont, P.
Farquharson, Dr. R.
Fenwick, C.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro-
Finucane, J.
Firth, J. F. B.
Forster, Sir C.
Fowler, rt. hon. H. H.
Gane, J. L.
Gardner, H.
Gaskell, C. G. Milnes-
Gill, T. P.
Gladstone, H. J.
Grey, Sir E.
Grove, Sir T. F.
Gully, W. C.
Haldane, R. B.
Harcourt, rt. hn. Sir W. G. V. V.
Harrington, E.
Harris, M.
Hayden, L. P.
Hayne, C. Seale-
Healy, T. M.
Hingley, B.
Holden, I.
Hooper, J.
Howell, G.
Hoyle, I.
Hunter, W. A.
Jacoby, J. A.
Joicey, J.
Kay-Shuttleworth, rt. hon. Sir U. J.
Kennedy, E. J.
Kenny, C. S.
Kilbride, D.
Lawson, Sir W.
Lawson, H. L. W.
Leake, R.
Lefevre, right hon. G. J. S.
Lewis, T. P.
Lockwood, F.
Mac Neill, J. G. S.
M‘Arthur, A.
M‘Arthur, W. A.
M‘Carthy, J.
M‘Donald, Dr. R.
M‘Ewan, W.
M‘Laren, W. S. B.
Mahony, P.
Menzies, R. S.
Morgan, right hon. G. O.
Morley, rt. hon. J.
Morley, A.
Mundella, right hon. A. J.
Murphy, W. M.
Newnes, G.
Nolan, Colonel J. P.
Nolan, J.
O'Brien, J. F. X.
O'Brien, P.
O'Brien, P. J.
O'Connor, A.
O'Connor, J.
O'Connor, T. P.
O'Kelly, J.
Paulton, J. M.
Pease, A. E.
Pickersgill, E. H.
Picton, J. A.
Pinkerton, J.
Plowden, Sir W. C.
Potter, T. B.
Power, P. J.
Price, T. P.
Priestley, B.
Quinn, T.
Rathbone, W.
Redmond, W. H. K.
Reid, R. T.
Roberts, J.
Roberts, J. B.
Roe, T.
Roscoe, Sir H. E.
Rowlands, J.
Russell, Sir C.
Samuelson, G. B.
Schwann, C. E.
Sheehan, J. D.
Simon, Sir J.
Smith, S.
Spencer, hon. C. R.
Stanhope, hon. P. J.
Stevenson, F. S.
Stewart, H.
Stuart, J.
Sullivan, D.
Sullivan, T. D.
Summers, W.
Swinburne, Sir J.
Trevelyan, right hon. Sir G. O.
Tuite, J.
Warmington, C. M.
Watt, H.
Wayman, T.
Will, J. S.
Williams, A. J.
Williamson, S.
Wilson, H. J.
Woodhead, J.
Wright, C.

TELLERS.
Cameron, J. M.
Labouchere, H.

Main Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

SUPPLY.—Committee upon *Monday* next.

And it being One of the Clock, Mr. Speaker left the Chair without Question put.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 12th March, 1888.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Coroners * (36); Quarter Sessions * (37); Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (No, 2) * (38); Land Charges Registration and Searches * (40).

Second Reading—Referred to Select Committee—Liability of Trustees * (24).

Committee—Report—Pluralities Acts Amendment Acts, 1885, Amendment * (26).

Report—Pharmacy Acts Amendment * (34-39).

SCIENCE AND ART (METROPOLIS)—CHARTER FOR A TEACHING UNIVERSITY.—QUESTION.

LORD **HERSCHELL** said, that in the absence of his noble Friend (Earl Granville) he desired to ask the Lord President of the Council, Whether he has made up his mind as to the manner in which he would deal with the application for a charter for a Teaching University in London and other like applications for charters; and whether he has come to a conclusion as to a Royal Commission on the subject?

THE **LORD PRESIDENT** (Viscount CRANBROOK), in reply, said, that he had come to the determination to recommend the issue of a Royal Commission to inquire into the subject, which was one dealing with a large number of interests. He thought the Commission need not be a large one, and then they would get through the work more speedily, and perhaps in time to report this Session.

AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRESS.—RESOLUTION.

EARL **DE LA WARR**, in rising to move—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, considering the depressed condition of agricultural and other industries in this country, and the consequent distress among the working classes, it is incumbent upon Her Majesty's Government to take into their serious consideration what measures can be adopted to avert the grave consequences which must otherwise ensue,"

said, that the country had long been waiting patiently in the hope that there might be some favourable change in the prospects of agriculture and other industries of the country. There had, indeed, been glimpses of improvement, and of a brighter day; but they had faded almost as soon as they appeared, and though there might be a prospect of well-doing for some industries in the country, the prospects of agriculture at the present time were no better than they had been for some years past. Having quoted the testimony of the Prime Minister at Derby recently as to the depressed condition of agriculture, the noble Earl observed that it was far from his wish to say or do anything which might embarrass Her Majesty's Government; but it seemed to him that on a question of such vital importance to the country some intimation ought to be given of what the intentions of Her Majesty's Government were, especially after the words of Her Majesty's Speech. It might be useless to refer to statistics, as they were well known to most of their Lordships; but he might observe that it had been stated on trustworthy authority that the loss sustained by the owners and occupiers of land during the last 10 years amounted to £600,000,000. Sir James Caird gave evidence before the Agricultural Commission not very long ago to the effect that the average loss to growers of wheat alone in the last few years was £17,000,000 annually. In many places there were 40 or 50 per cent of the landowners not able to live in their houses, and it was further found, according to calculations believed to be as nearly as possible correct, that there were 900,000 of the working population who could not without the greatest difficulty find any employment. The wages in the agricultural districts were getting lower, and there was every prospect of their continuing to do so. We were further informed on trustworthy authority that there were 1,000,000 acres of corn-bearing land which had been either thrown out of cultivation or turned into pasture in England and Scotland, and over 1,000,000 in Ireland, and that 200,000 persons had been in consequence thrown out of employment. The result was a great migration into London and other large towns of persons who there found themselves in a worse condition of distress and destitution. He thought these facts justified him in bringing this question under their Lordships' notice. He did not wish to exaggerate in the least; his only object was that the attention of their Lordships and of Her Majesty's

Government should be drawn to the subject. The condition of agriculture was the matter with which he was best acquainted, but the remarks which applied to agriculture applied in a great measure, though, perhaps, not quite as much, to other industries of great importance to this country. What he wanted to bring under their Lordships' notice was that if those industries were failing the consequence must be that a large number of the working population must be thrown out of employment, and brought in many places to a state of great destitution. The question of the depression in the country was one which concerned not only landlords, but manufacturers, capitalists, and all other persons who had anything to do with the great industries of the country, and it was certain that the labouring population, who were already beginning to feel most acutely, would in time feel this distress more almost than any other class. It was impossible to walk through the streets of London without noticing the large number of shops filled with foreign goods. Foreign goods were taking the place in the most prominent manner of English goods. The silk industry was almost at an end. The last sugar manufactory in London was closed only a short time ago, and in the manufacture of hats, gloves, lace, and other such articles the French were driving English goods out of the market. German goods could, also, be seen everywhere. The iron industry had been supplanted by Belgian and German goods, and our swords and bayonets were made abroad, while thousands of Sheffield men were standing idle. While all this went on it must act severely on the labour market of this country, and therefore the question of foreign competition concerned the working classes of this country more, perhaps, than any other question. A man who is dependent upon labour for his very existence now finds foreign workmen doing in another country the work he ought to be doing here. This was no longer a time for theorizing on questions of political economy. Facts were daily brought home to the people of this country which compelled them to turn their attention seriously to the question of their failing industries, and to consider whether some protection ought not to be given to those engaged in home industries. It was said that the question of protection of British industries against foreign competition was not within the range of practical politics. He was quite aware of the difficulties which surrounded the question, but he would remind their Lordships that the competition of the present day was quite different from what it was 40 years ago, in the day of Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Cobden. In their day steam and railways were almost in their infancy, but this country was brought into close contact both by land and sea with almost all the countries of the world. This competition was altogether unforeseen by Mr. Cobden, as might be gathered from his own words—namely, "I do not anticipate that wheat will be reduced below 45*s.* per quarter, even by Free Trade." Surely there was reason why some change on our part should be made. There might be other reasons besides those he had mentioned which had in some measure added to the great depression from which this country suffered, such as the currency question and the vast amount of capital which went abroad to be invested in manufacture, in railways, and also in agriculture. It was calculated that an income of £100,000,000 was produced out of British capital by foreign labour. In *The Financier* newspaper of the 25th of February there appeared a report of a meeting of the shareholders of the Northern Railway of Canada relative to the fusion of the great Canadian railways, and at which a letter was read from Mr. W. H. Smith, M.P., the largest shareholder of the Company, expressing himself in favour of the scheme. He mentioned this as an instance of what was taking place with regard to foreign investments of English capital, which might probably be added as one of the causes of the present industrial distress. In conclusion, he would add that, even if changes in local government and local taxation were made, he believed they would be found inadequate to afford relief to the working classes or to revive failing industries. The question which for some time past had almost paralyzed the energies of the country could only be solved, as it seemed to him, by adapting our own existing fiscal system to the changed circumstances of the time, and to the altered conditions of the commercial relations of different countries of the world.

Moved to resolve,

"That, in the opinion of this House, considering the depressed condition of agricultural and other industries in this country and the consequent distress among the working classes, it is incumbent upon Her Majesty's Government to take into their serious consideration what measures can be adopted to avert the grave consequences which must otherwise ensue."—(*The Earl De La Warr.*)

THE MARQUESS OF HUNTLY said, he would confine himself to that branch of the subject with which he was connected—namely, the condition of agriculture. There could be no doubt as to the existence of agricultural distress; it was almost unparalleled. It had now passed beyond depression. Landlords, tenants, and labourers were all alike suffering. He had within the last few days seen villages in Hunts, Northants, and Cambridgeshire denuded of a mass of young labourers emigrating to Queensland. Why was this? Because neither owners nor tenants could find work for them. Many more would go, but their age prevented them. Tenants spoke helplessly of their condition, and many were quite bankrupt. Their Lordships were quite aware how the crisis had affected landlords, so that he need not enlarge upon that; but the opinion was evidently held by some of the leaders of the people that the landlords alone were to blame for having exacted high rents, and that any remedial legislation would benefit the oligarchical class of landlords. He would mention one case known to him personally to show the hardships that had fallen on landlords. A gentleman succeeded to an estate 20 years ago. It was heavily burdened with charges and jointures, and the buildings and cottages on it were in a ruinous condition. He paid off half the mortgages, and spent the whole of the income from the estate in repairing the buildings, draining the land, and in other improvements. Up to 1874 things went well, but since then rents had fallen, and the rental was now 50 per cent lower than it was when he succeeded. The consequence was that he was now getting no income whatever out of the estate, although he paid off £30,000 of debt and spent over £40,000 in improvements. The fall in the values of agricultural produce appeared to be the reason of the distress. He did not intend to enter into the great social question, and a great social question it was, whether this denudation of capital from the land in these Islands, the breakdown of the agricultural system, and the emigration of the rural population should be arrested or not. He proposed to confine himself entirely to the commercial question, and the point regarding the value of agricultural produce in so far as these Islands were affected by it. Thinking it would be interesting to learn the condition of those countries which competed with Great Britain in the agricultural market, he lately made a tour in India, Australia. New Zealand, Canada, and America, He found everywhere that the universal complaint was — no profit at present prices. As regarded India, there was no doubt the fall in the value of silver had been one of the chief causes—one, he said, because the extension of irrigation works and the bringing of more land into regular cultivation had been the means—of increasing the large exportation of wheat from that country. He should not enter into the silver question, because that subject was being fully inquired into before a Royal Commission; but he might say this—while the rupee went as far, or was taken at its original value, in India, and the merchant bought the wheat in the bazaars with it under the silver standard, he sold it in Europe, receiving payment under the gold standard. The difference in the rate of exchange enabled the merchant to give more money to the grower of corn in India, which, though a very good thing for him perhaps, acted as a bounty against the producer in England and other parts of the world. But even at Delhi and other wheat-growing centres of the North-West he found the fall in values was seriously affecting the position of the farmers, and complaint was universal. In Australia and New Zealand the opinion was unanimous that, with the price of wheat at 30*s.* per quarter in England, they could not send it to us at a profit to themselves. In the great wheat-growing districts of the North-West of America and Canada he found rather different conditions existing. He was there just before the commencement of last year's harvest and the appearance of the crops was very good, but these crops could not be relied on; many farmers told him that if they reaped the present crop without its being frosted it would be the first for four years that they had harvested and had not afterwards found half of it, sometimes two-thirds, spoilt by frost. He believed they got it all in good condition last year, but even then, deducting all costs and transport, it did not pay them to grow at 30*s.* per quarter. Their Lordships might wonder why, then, they sent it, and continued to grow it. They were obliged to send it at whatever price they could get. The settler in the North-West loaded his waggon with corn and went to the nearest railway station, delivered it over to the elevator; the agent gave current price for it, and back the settler wandered for miles over the prairie with his money in his pocket; he could not pick and choose his market—he was obliged to take what he could get. Some deleterious action had resulted from the operation or management of many of the Mortgage Companies in America and the North-West. Men took blocks of land, borrowed money on them from the Companies on mortgage, farmed as long as they were solvent, then left and threw their lands upon the Companies' hands. These men had nothing to lose but a great deal to gain. Without capital of their own, they traded in the speculation with money advanced at high rates of interest, feeling no personal responsibility if they failed. The effect and the result of this inflated system had been disastrous. He had touched on these points to explain the position of corn and meat producers in other countries, and the result of his conclusions was that low prices were affecting them as much as they were affecting us. If the agriculturist were treated equally with other traders, he could grow cereals and meat in this country to yield him a profit at present prices as well as he could if he were in any other country in the world. He named the present prices of agricultural produce, because he did not think that we could look for any rise in their value. We could not hope for any diminution of supply, and there was no likelihood of prices rising materially. Foreign countries had the commodities and must find mouths to consume them. Low rates charged on large cargoes for long distances had equalized prices, and the earth's increase would come more and more abundantly to us." Corn was being delivered in Liverpool from America at the freight rate of 6*d.* per quarter, while from Liverpool to most of the consuming centres of England the rate was about 3*s.* per quarter. The ridiculously low rate at which flour was being delivered in this country precluded all but the largest millers, with a long-established connection, from making any profit by milling, and the flour mills were being closed in all directions. On all sides our farmers said that they could not make both ends meet, that corn crops did not pay them, and that the breeding of stock had become unprofitable. He thought that most farmers omitted the valuation of their straw from their calculations, and did not take into consideration the produce of their farm as a whole. There could, however, be no doubt that the pinch was tremendous, and that the depression was great. Was any remedy to be found, one which would so revive agriculture as to give increased employment to the labouring classes? He did not think that Protection would be a remedy. If one industry were protected others must be protected also. Some day, perhaps, the necessities of other traders of the country might require duties to be placed on foreign manufactured goods, and, if that day should come, agriculturists would be able to demand, with fairness, that duties should be levied on manufactured produce, such as flour and cheese. But, however hard it was on the one side to see the quartern loaf sold for 4*d.*, to know that the English farmer could not grow the corn to pay him at that price, and on the other side to see hundreds starving from want of employment and unable to buy the quartern loaf, he did not believe in Protection. Agriculture was suffering almost as much from being unequally treated by the State as from low prices. Speaking on September 1, 1887, the noble Earl (the Earl of Derby) said that the State might relieve the farmers of some part of the burden of taxation at present imposed upon them. That was the direction in which agriculturists ought to look for relief. The farmer was over-taxed, and not placed, as he ought to be, on the same footing with other traders. The present system of assessment for rateable purposes ought to be changed in accordance with the recommendation of the Select

Committee of 1870, and with several Resolutions agreed to in "another place." Other measures which would aid in bringing about an improved state of things were the abolition of preferential railway rates and the establishment of middle class or secondary schools for the teaching of agriculture and dairy farming. He ventured to press these points upon the Government, and cordially supported the Resolution of the noble Earl.

VISCOUNT TORRINGTON: Those who look with a light heart upon the present position of the country or who ignore the pressing difficulties of the industrial classes appear to be blind to two most remarkable features of comparatively recent growth in our national life. On the one hand, there is a prevailing demand among a section of philanthropists—who would improve the condition of the working classes—for national funds to export our unemployed people—a plan known under the name of "State-aided Emigration;" and, on the other hand, we find an increasing exodus of capital, transferred from this country to protected States, to enable our manufacturers to retain their old customers. The fact is notorious that many of our old-established manufacturers are being compelled to establish branches, if not to transfer all their works, to other countries, instead of employing home labour as in the past. These changed conditions of national life must—as Cardinal Manning truly said the other day in his letter to Mr. Wyndham—be faced; and the question for your Lordships, and indeed all the country, to consider is what we have to look to in order to replace the continually contracting markets for our labour. For it must not be lost sight of that, side by side with contracting markets in foreign States for British goods, the home market for the general industries of the country, other than agriculture, is also contracted to an even greater degree. Before the late Royal Commission the annual decrease in the purchase power of the agricultural community was set down by Sir James Caird at £42,000,000. There is every reason to believe that since then the deficit of two years ago has been enormously aggravated. But consider only what it means for the working classes of the country to be deprived of original customers to the extent of £42,000,000 a-year, these in their turn destroying the earnings, and therefore the purchase power, of hundreds of thousands of others. It seems to me that in these bare facts will be found the primary causes of the scarcity of continuous employment, and that if we are to seek for remedies we must recognize the causes. We, therefore, have to discover fresh markets abroad, and, if it be in our power, to restore vitality to our industrial markets at home. Have we, then, the means within our grasp to accomplish these ends? Few, I think, will deny that an undoubted element of political weakness exists on our reliance to so large an extent upon external food supplies. And it is a grave question whether the low prices of food stuffs of recent years have not been dearly bought at the cost of such weakness. And yet is it not possible that in this element of weakness lie the germs of national safety and renewed vitality to our industrial centres, if we would but turn it to advantage as any private trader would do in his own business? I say boldly that it is in our gigantic food custom alone may be found the solution of the great industrial problem of today. Are all your Lordships aware of the extent of that custom which we now fritter away without thought? Of our total food consumption of—in round numbers—£450,000,000 per annum, we import some £150,000,000. The greater portion of this enormous custom is absolutely withdrawn from our home producers, who, in their turn, would have spent every penny on other labour products, and is to-day given instead to at least to one foreign State, whose return trade in commodities is no more than 7*s*. in the pound for each sovereign's worth we buy of her—namely, the United States. But use that enormous lever with wisdom, treat it as a bargaining power—the greatest any nation ever possessed—and what great probabilities are before us. Divert, if we can, that national custom to our own land, and to the land of our Possessions scattered over the face of the world—and what must be the result? For such portion as is diverted homeward we have the assurance of the continual turnover and re-turnover of such earnings, and from our own Possessions we have the guarantee of experience that, in spite of their Customs Duties, they take from us of our labour commodities in nearly full exchange of what we buy. Such diversion, indeed, cannot take place without creating an absolute preference in our markets for the products of our Empire, as against those of foreign States. It involved the full reconsideration of our fiscal system. It involved ceasing to give foreign products a preference in our market-places, by freeing them from the taxation which we all have to bear as producers, directly or indirectly. It meant looking to the home market for increased demand, and to our Possessions for such external supplies as our population needs. We shall be told, perhaps, that already the long-promised revival is at hand, and that the Board of Trade Returns show increased vitality. This latter is, of course, a fact, and yet not one on which we ought to rely too greatly. Such Returns are contrasted with two terribly bad years, and, so far as they go, only give evidence of an increased demand from abroad, where the purchase power, after depression, has already recovered. What new vitality is apparent does not, unhappily, arise out of an improved demand from home custom; and until that last feature comes into operation, it were idle to believe in, or to hope for, a return of prosperity.

Lord DENMAN said, it could hardly be expected that the Government would give an opinion as to "Protection," since there was so strong an antipathy to it; and as the two leading statesmen of the day promised that some duty on corn should be continued, it might be feared that the Ministry might equally forfeit any pledge that they might give. The great constituency of Sheffield had shown that they wished for Protection all round. He (Lord Denman) showed a cigar case, for which he had given only 1*s.* 6*d.*; a silversmith repaired it and charged 1*s.* 6*d.* He (Lord Denman) said it had cost that sum. The tradesman said it had cost and was worth much more. On inquiry of the vendor, he found that it had cost that small sum; and he left it with the silversmith, and intended to send him a new one, but, being foreign, no more were to be had, but the contents of it—tobacco—were taxed at least 15 per cent; and if this were better than "Sheffield silver" it ought to handicapped. One noble Earl (the Earl of Wemyss) had said he would never tax the food of the people; but if 1*s.* were taken in taxes, that would buy bread, and thus the food of the people was taxed. In 1814 no wheat could be imported until the price had risen to 80*s.* a-quarter. Mr. Baring tried in vain to reduce it to 75*s.* A fixed duty was advocated by Sir James Graham in his *Corn and Currency;* as Free Trade, it admitted corn when cheap abroad, and a sliding scale only admitted it when corn was dear both at home and abroad. Corn might be in bond, but it would have had to pay warehouse room until, from the high price of corn, it could be admitted at a low duty. The father of the late Lord Denman, to whose training he was indebted for his eminence, saw the riots in 1814, and observed that it was a delusion to state that a tax on corn would starve the people, because, if sudden war or foreign famines occurred the people would then be starved. Land had gone out of cultivation in Suffolk and Hertfordshire. A living in Suffolk of £800 a-year had been reduced to £100. The noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury) had been reported to have bought land near Baldock for £10 an acre; and while Hertfordshire white wheat might make as good flour as Austrian, it sold at very much less than Austrian flour. The noble Marquess (the Marquess of Hartington) had lately headed a deputation praying that iron rails might pay market dues. The First Lord of the Treasury said that but for the railways these rails could never have reached the market; but the giving up dues reminded him of two Macaulays, who had two white uncles Tom (himself and Lord Macaulay); one lost his alpenstick in the sea; the other said—"If it will do you any good I will throw mine in after it;" but the offer was declined. When the Paper Duties had been abolished, Lord Brougham, at a Social Science Dinner, speaking of Members of the House of Lords, said they were "not only alive, but kicking." Mr. Huskisson had said—

> "That mutual prohibitions were mutual nuisances; but, as between us and Prussia—applicable to all nations—we ought to have mutual facilities."

He (Lord Denman) would wish half the duty levied on all English produce abroad placed on imports. When the Paper Duties were abolished, the late Duke of Rutland would not press the House to a Division, lest the result of it should be to throw the finances of the country into disorder; but we thus sacrificed £500,000 a-year, which was willingly paid by the purchasers of newspapers.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): This debate has taken a somewhat discursive turn, and I hope I shall not be guilty of extreme brevity if I do not add many minutes to a discussion which has already lasted a considerable time. But I confess that, though the discussion concerns a matter on which we all feel as deeply as on any political question, it does not appear to me to be of a practical character, or likely to lead to any practical result. There is no doubt about the distress, and it is not necessary to prove it, as my noble Friend behind me did. We are all aware of it, and we are only too sensible that it exists. There is probably no public body of men in the Kingdom who are more sensible of the existence of agricultural depression than this Assembly. Nor is there any necessity to prove to us the great calamities which that depression has led to. But before we make it the subject of debate we must establish, in our own minds at all events, that there is some measure which it is within the reach of Parliament to adopt which will materially limit or mitigate the evils which we all deplore. There is great depression in a neighbouring country in the great wine-growing industry; but it would be of no use for them to discuss that depression, or bring it up as a matter of complaint against the Government, because it is dependent upon well-known natural causes which no Government or Parliament can remove. I fear that the depression in England, though not dependent upon such simple causes, is dependent equally upon great natural and economical causes, and the power of Parliaments or Governments to cope with it is very limited. Because I say this I shall not be supposed either to ignore its deep gravity, or wish to depreciate its extent. I am bound, however, to say that I cannot concur with one phrase which my noble Friend who introduced the subject brought forward, when he spoke of starving populations. We know, of course, that there is always a certain amount of misery in the country; but my noble Friend could hardly have listened the other night to the interesting speech of my noble Friend (Lord Balfour), who showed from the Poor Law Returns that the country is not, with respect to its most numerous class, in a most miserable condition. If I remember the figures, there is a smaller proportion of pauperism at this moment by nearly a half than there was some 20 years ago. It is impossible, therefore, to speak as though we were in the presence of a calamity deeply affecting the vast masses of the country. On the contrary, speaking of the poorest and most numerous class, in spite of all the calamities we have to face, I think we may congratulate ourselves that it has hit them more lightly than the less numerous classes. When we came to the remedy my noble Friends who have spoken were neither concordant nor very clear. Two of my noble Friends spoke for Protection. The noble Marquess opposite (the Marquess of Huntly) disclaimed any sympathy with these doctrines; but he seemed to indicate that some relief might be obtained from measures of a more limited character which it is in the power of the Government to adopt. Well, we have admitted that to a certain extent in the language of the Queen's Speech—we have admitted that there are measures which we can and ought to adopt. I am afraid it will be impossible for me to give a preliminary account of them, and I must ask my noble Friend to wait until the President of the Local Government Board and the Chancellor of the Exchequer have had an opportunity of addressing the other House upon the subject. But I fully admit that to all measures of that smaller and more limited kind it is the bounden duty of the Government to address itself, and to take every opportunity which that restricted field offers of mitigating the depression in the agricultural industry which exists. But my noble Friends are the first to say that it is not in that quarter that anything like a dissipation of the calamity can be looked for. It is a question which is too large, it rests upon bases too broad, it issues from natural laws too imperious, and there remains only one remedy—that which the noble Lord opposite disclaimed, but which my noble Friends behind me

(Earl De La Warr and Viscount Torrington) adopted—the remedy of Protection. I have simply to say with respect to the question of Protection that this country has adopted the opposite system after a controversy unexampled in its length, in its earnestness, and in the decision with which the ultimate issue was arrived at. If we are to undertake the re-examination of that question it must not be done incidentally, by insinuation, by allusion, by hints. You must firmly walk up to the fortress that you have to attack and lay siege to it in form. If my noble Friend wishes really to challenge the doctrine of Free Trade, and wishes really this country to retrace its steps, he must bring forward a definite Motion for the purpose of letting us hear the arguments on which he rests his case, and letting us discuss them formally and with a deliberation and care suited to the gravity of the subject. When he does so I shall be quite prepared to lay before him, and at length, the arguments which utterly prevent me from agreeing with any such proposition. In my belief, the economical arguments in favour of Free Trade are very strong; but they are not the strongest with which we have to deal. If he will look back upon the debates of 1846 and read the speech of Sir Robert Peel when introducing his great proposal, he will see that the political argument weighed more heavily than even the economical argument in his mind; and I believe that the political argument has lost none of its force. I utterly disbelieve that it is in your power to introduce Protection. If it were, I think it would be introducing a state of division among the classes of this country which would differ very little from civil war. For such reasons, which on such an occasion as I am foreshadowing I should try to develop at greater length and support with stronger proofs—for reasons of that kind I cannot to any extent accept the remedy which, I am sure, quite sincerely and with an earnest desire for the good of this country, my noble Friend has laid before this House. It is a remedy which I am convinced Parliament will never accede to. If, then, you cannot have a return to Protection, we must look to the ordinary working of the economic laws, to the return to more healthy conditions which in the past have always followed periods of depression, and which we may hope will follow this period of depression again. We must trust also to the combined working of the industry and enterprize of the nation, which has lost in no degree those qualities which have led to its high position, its power, and wealth; we must look to those causes, and we may look to them confidently, to dissipate the calamities to which the noble Earl has referred and which we all deplore.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

METROPOLIS (STREET IMPROVEMENTS)—HYDE PARK CORNER.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

EARL FORTESCUE, in rising to ask Her Majesty's Government, When it is intended to commence the work of adorning the space between Constitution Hill and Hyde Park Corner, of which expectations were held out some time ago; also, whether there was any hope of the roadway being somewhat widened between the south end of Hamilton Place and Gloucester House, so as to diminish the constant block of the traffic in that part of Piccadilly and of Hamilton Place during the months of May, June, and July? said, that the undeniably valuable improvements at Hyde Park Corner were sadly marred by want of taste, and ignorance of the traffic requirements of the place. It would be within the recollection of their Lordships that a number of trees that had stood in the Green Park were thrown outside of it by the work of improving the access to Belgravia. Among those trees there had been a particularly graceful group nearly opposite Apsley House, and these trees had been suddenly and surreptitiously cut down and carted away one day before breakfast. Not only had the appearance of the spot been impaired by this act of Vandalism, but the numerous foot passengers were also deprived of most welcome shade. He could only suppose that Mr. Shaw Lefevre was emulous of his Chief in cutting down trees as well as in attacking institutions and legislating to authorize the breaking of contracts. Then, much inconvenience with regard to communications had resulted from the way in which these improvements had been carried out. The traffic along Hamilton

Place was peculiar. Practically, the whole of it from the North was to the South and West, and *vice versâ*; any traffic for the East would certainly continue its course down the lower part of Park Lane. No provision was, therefore, necessary for traffic in Hamilton Place that had to go in any direction except South to Belgravia and West to Kensington; and, obviously, the convenient and natural course would have been to insure the continuance of the East and West traffic along Piccadilly uninterrupted, and provide for two lines of traffic up and down to and from Hamilton Place on the north side of Piccadilly from about Northampton House. He had been confirmed in this view by one of the policemen that regulated the traffic at the corner of Hamilton Place with so much good temper and tact, who told him that he and his mates had often talked the matter over, and agreed that that was the right remedy for the frequent obstruction there, as the traffic disentangled itself when it reached a wide place. As at present arranged, the traffic from Hamilton Place had to come down a slope of wood pavement and cross traffic coming down a corresponding slope in Piccadilly. It was wonderful that more accidents did not happen; as it was, the constant blocking in the summer was notorious. If that part of Piccadilly east of Hamilton Place had been widened 18 feet, great inconvenience would have been saved. He had ventured, before the costly permanent railing was fixed, to make that suggestion to the authorities, and the answer he had got had been that the roadway had been opened so short a time that it was impossible to judge the result. That, in his opinion, was eminently characteristic of that sort of combination of habitual parsimony, with occasional spasms of extravagance, but never real economy, which characterized Mr. Gladstone's administration. The work of fixing the substantial railings was to go on, while experience was to say whether it was in its right place. Every carriage going down Hamilton Place to Knightsbridge had to cross one line of traffic and get to the other side, in order to make its way to Knightsbridge. He hoped that there was still a prospect of something being done.

LORD LAMINGTON said, that the question which his noble Friend had brought forward afforded another proof of the great mismanagement of the public works of the Metropolis by the Office of Works. It was nearly three years since the open space called Wellington Square was cleared, and it had been left in a most disgraceful state. The Office of Public Works seemed to have no system of management whatever. The only public works which had been creditably carried out were those which had been executed by the Metropolitan Board of Works. Without that body none of our new streets or embankments would have been made. He saw it stated the other day that the condition of Battersea Park was a disgrace to a civilized country, that there were two feet of filth in the water, and that no care had been bestowed upon it by the Office of Works. But now it had been made over to the Metropolitan Board of Works, and he hoped it would be looked after.

THE EARL OF POWIS observed that it would be very desirable to throw back for three or four yards in width the fence of the Green Park, as from the end of Park Lane to the end of Hamilton Place the road was very much narrower than between Hamilton Place and Hyde Park Corner.

LORD MAGHERAMORNE (CHAIRMAN of the METROPOLITAN BOARD of WORKS) said, that as to the condition of Battersea Park, he did not wish to say anything disagreeable against another public department, but so far as the state of that Park had been brought under his cognizance it was not at all satisfactory. However, now that the Park was in the hands of the Metropolitan Board of Works, they would endeavour, as soon as possible, to put it into a proper condition.

LORD HENNIKER said, he did not think their Lordships would expect him to follow the noble Lord into the state of Battersea Park or the business of the Office of Works. He would confine himself to the Question put by the noble Earl on the Cross Benches. The adornment of Hyde Park Corner or Wellington Square was undertaken two or three years ago by a Committee presided over by the illustrious Prince his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and the funds were provided by private subscription, to which were added £6,000 granted by Parliament. The Committee had agreed to a scheme, the main feature of which was that an equestrian statue of the great Duke of Wellington should be erected opposite Apsley House. The statue was being executed by Mr. Boehm, R.A., and it was hoped that it would be placed in its position next autumn. The Committee intended to spend any available balance of the fund in improving the surrounding spaces. This balance would not be so great as to allow very elaborate treatment, but his noble Friend would be glad to hear that it was the intention of the Committee to plant some trees around those spaces. He could not undertake to apologize for the cutting down of the large trees which had been referred to, or say anything about them, because his right hon. Friend now at the head of the Department had, he believed, nothing to do with the matter. The intention of the Committee was that the three plots of ground should be laid down with asphalte pavement, and that there should be an ornamental granite pedestal or platform on which the statue would be placed. It was hoped the whole of the improvement would be completed before the 1st of November next. With regard to the other Question, he would refer the noble Earl to the Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works, because it was not a matter with which the Office of Works had anything to do. He admitted the importance of the question of the traffic, but as far as the Office of Works was concerned, they thought it was entirely for the Metropolitan Board of Works to deal with it, and they did not propose to take any steps in the matter.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—STANDING ORDERS.—RESOLUTION.

Lord STRATHEDEN and CAMPBELL: My Lords, the experience of last Monday has led me to think that it is not desirable to bring on a further Standing Order at an hour when many noble Lords have left the House who are competent to offer an opinion on it. I will, therefore, with your permission, postpone the Notice, but so as to bring it on before the 19th of March, when we are to have the general debate to which these questions are subordinate.

Lord COLVILLE of CULROSS said, he must protest against the course the noble Lord had pursued in this matter. The noble Lord had already postponed the same Motion on two previous occasions, and now proposed to do so again. He had had considerable experience in the matter of the Private Business of the House, having served many years on the Committee of Selection, and he had come down to the House every night when this proposal had appeared on the Paper, and he thought it was rather hard on noble Lords who took an interest in the subject that it should be postponed night after night.

Lord STRATHEDEN and CAMPBELL: If it is the wish of the House, or Her Majesty's Government, I am as well prepared to explain the further Standing Order now as I shall be at any other moment. It is unnecessary to repeat, except for those who were not here a week ago, that I have only ventured to approach the Standing Orders in view of and in reference to the larger changes by which the House of Lords is threatened. Since I spoke on Monday last, in "another place" 162 Members, including a great part of the late Government, have voted for a Resolution which, if carried out, would exclude from this Assembly every one in it beyond the Right Reverend Bench, those who sit on the Appellate Court, and those who have been made Peers for their extraordinary services. It is, therefore, clearly time to put an end to all unnecessary blemishes. The case I have now to bring before the House is irresistible, and I at once proceed to it in detail. In the absence of a compulsory system, the material we have is not adequate to make up Committees on Private Bills of five in number. I am forced to touch on what occurred to me in order to put that proposition beyond question. When the present Government was formed, after the General Election, I happened to remain in London during August, and was asked to serve on a Private Bill Committee. Having consented, I repaired, on the stated day and at the stated hour, to the House to find it thoroughly deserted. With much difficulty I ascertained from an official who seemed to be the only one upon the premises, that the Committee had broken down, because the number could not be completed. There is no reason to think it ever was completed. The same thing may always happen at that period. It could not be arranged, however, to have three in

August and five during the remainder of the Session. The noble Duke the Chairman of Committees (the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos) must, I think, go with me upon this part of the subject. But I contend that three would be a superior tribunal as compared with five, having observed the latter much in both Houses of Parliament. It would be superior from the necessity of greater vigilance and more sustained attention which arises. On that point, however, men may differ, and I will not dwell, although much might be said, upon it. A Committee of three is far more attractive than one of five to those who sit upon it. There is less ennui and fatigue in proportion as more devolves on every individual. According to the late Sir Robert Peel, a Committee is a state of "intramural interment." But it is redeemed in some degree by the necessity of working in it. Setting aside the waste of men in supernumerary Members, there are not wanting noble Lords who would avoid a Committee of five if they could do so, and would be prepared to serve on one of three were it proposed to them. The facility of organizing Private Bill Committees would be thus increased not only because, arithmetically speaking, three is grasped more easily than five, but because a greater number is disposed to join the less than the more numerous tribunal. But there is something more essential. So long as five are requisite, there must be verbal application, as there is now in the House, to noble Lords upon the Benches; either from the Chairman of Committees, or those who manage the Divisions. The inconvenience of that system cannot be exaggerated. I have been witness day by day to the embarrassment it leads to. It is a constant struggle of importunity on one side and evasion on the other. Noble Lords are unable to engage themselves quite suddenly for a given day, and that without a certain limit, while they are unwilling to refuse the faintest service to the public. But there is a graver consequence to be ascribed to it. It is the powerful encouragement to non-attendance it occasions. When an Assembly of 500 habitually numbers about 50, sometimes being above that limit, but not unfrequently beneath it, there must be a cause for the phenomenon. The cause is quite sufficiently revealed if no Peer is able to attend the House without solicitation such as I have mentioned. It is a system framed to multiply the absent as well as harass those who may appear. I recommend this Standing Order, therefore, first as calculated to improve Committees; next, as rendering it much easier to grasp them; and, last, because it takes away, if not the source of non-attendance, at least by far too good a vindication of it. That three would be a proper number is an opinion I have formed by much discussion with an experienced and well-known Chairman of Private Bill Committees in the other House of Parliament. I engage Her Majesty's Government not to oppose this proposition; or if they do, at least not to reason as they did last Monday against one thing, when I have reasoned in favour of another. I appeal also to the noble Lords who concur with me as to the vicious practice of making up Committees in the House, and making them of an unnecessary size, to express themselves this evening. The noble Lord concluded by moving the Standing Order.

Moved, as a new Standing Order,

"That Private Bill Committees shall consist of three Members, and that all applications to Lords to serve upon them shall be addressed in writing to their residences."—(*The Lord Stratheden and Campbell.*)

LORD COLVILLE OF CULROSS said, that he had been a Member of the Committee of Selection for about 35 years, and believed that the present system of having five Members on Private Bill Committees had worked well. He thought that five Members were quite few enough, and hoped that their Lordships would refuse to alter the number. The noble Lord who brought this proposal forward had, he was informed, never served upon a Select Committee.

LORD STRATHEDEN and CAMPBELL said, the noble Lord had been wholly misinformed.

LORD COLVILLE OF CULROSS said, that last year the noble Lord very nearly served upon a Select Committee. He thought the suggested number of three was open to many disadvantages, one of which was that if one Member of the Committee was a weak man he would always side with the Chairman, who would be omnipotent. As regards the second part of the noble Lord's Motion, what he suggested was the course which was at present adopted by the Committee of Selection.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (The Duke of BUCKINGHAM and CHANDOS) said, he had expected that the noble Lord in bringing forward this Motion would have stated some facts to show that the Committees under the present system had failed to discharge their duties satisfactorily; but he had not done so. The number of five Members had now been established for a series of years, during which the decisions of the Committees of that House had been received with respect and satisfaction, and he saw no reason for any change. While occupying the position of Chairman of Committees he had found no difficulty in getting a sufficient number of Peers to constitute the required Committees. There had only been one instance where a Committee could not be got together, and that was at the end of the second Session of 1886, when it had been understood that no Private Bills would be proceeded with. As to the suggestion of the noble Lord, that applications to serve on Select Committees should only be made by letter, and that personal applications prevented Peers coming down to the House, he had to state that, in reply to written applications he often received answers saying that the matter had better be settled in conversation when the noble Lord addressed next visited the House. It would be highly inconvenient to settle these matters entirely by correspondence; for it was often impossible to constitute the Committee until the probable length that a Bill would take was settled, as otherwise it might not suit the noble Lord selected, and until its character was inquired into. For a noble Lord might, owing to the Bill being connected with his district, or for other reasons, be quite unsuitable. Under these circumstances, it was found most convenient to continue the present practice. Written applications would, however, continue to be sent out. He hoped the House would not accept the proposal to alter the Standing Order.

LORD GRIMTHORPE said, he agreed with the noble Lord (Lord Colville of Culross) that three was a very bad number for a Committee which had to decide upon evidence and not merely on points of law, like the Court of Appeal, where it is convenient for the Judges to be able to impart their views to each as the case goes on. He had had occasional experience of Committees accidentally reduced to three, and he had always found exactly the state of things indicated by Lord Colville of Culross—namely, the weakest Member of the Committee in a very short time obviously became a mere cypher to the Chairman. Even with the still larger but worse number of four, which the House of Commons had been led to adopt in 1865, the same thing happened; and as the Chairman has a casting vote, there the result was the Chairman with his cypher was able to overbear the possibly, if not probably, greater amount of sense possessed by the other two Members. That number was adopted by the House of Commons on statements that a sufficient number of Members could not be got for Committees of five. But after the Session a Parliamentary agent amused himself by calculating what number of the Members of the House of Commons had performed the whole Committee work of the Session, and he found that the number was no more than one-fifth of the House, the remaining four-fifths having impressed the Committee of Selection that they were so overburdened with work that they could not possibly serve. He mentioned this as a warning to their Lordships not to be tempted into making any reduction in the number for a Committee which he was sure from very long experience was the best.

LORD STRATHEDEN and CAMPBELL: My Lords, I wish to make a statement in answer to the personal reflection of the noble Earl who taunted me for wishing to postpone the Notice. The three Standing Orders I proposed were all put down for the 5th of March, the day previous to the intended Resolution of Lord Dunraven. The first of them came on, but it was too late to discuss the others. They stood for Thursday the 8th; a large amount of preliminary Business rendered it impossible to move them. They were adjourned until to-day, when I was quite ready to go on with them. There is no ground for any accusation. I shall not make a long reply to arguments adduced against the number of three for Private Bill Committees. I never doubted that Committees of five were able and efficient, but only pointed to the inconveniences they bring upon your Lordships. As Her Majesty's Government have given no opinion to counteract that of the noble Duke the Chairman, I will not divide the House. If the Standing Order was adopted, it would be a gain. If it is not adopted, that circumstance will strengthen the reformers of the House with whom I am far from wholly disagreeing.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

CORONERS BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the Coroners Act, 1887—Was *presented* by The Lord Chancellor; read 1ª. (No. 36.)

QUARTER SESSIONS BILL [H.L.]

A Bill for amending the law with respect to the times of holding quarter sessions; and for other purposes connected therewith—Was *presented* by The Lord Chancellor; read 1ª. (No. 37.)

ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT (1882) AMENDMENT (NO. 2) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the Electric Lighting Act, 1882—Was *presented* by The Lord Wigan (*Earl of Crawford*); read 1ª. (No. 38.)

LAND CHARGES REGISTRATION AND SEARCHES BILL [H.L.]

A Bill for registering certain charges on land, and for facilitating searches for them in the central office—Was *presented* by The Lord Hobhouse; read 1ª. (No. 40.)

House adjourned at a quarter past
Seven o'clock, till To-morrow,
a quarter past Ten o'clock,

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 12*th March*, 1888.

MINUTES.] — New Writ Issued — *For* Glamorgan County (Western or Gower Division), *v.* Frank Ash Yeo, esquire, deceased.

Private Bill (*by Order*)—*Second Reading*—Cork and Bandon Railway.

Public Bill—*Resolution* [March 9] *reported* *Ordered — First Reading* — National Debt (Conversion) * [164].

Ordered—First Reading—Westminster Abbey * [165]; County Courts (Ireland) * [166].

Second Reading—Timber Acts (Ireland) Amendment * [157]; Copyright (Musical Compositions) * [156].

Withdrawn — Friendly Societies Act (1875) Amendment (No. 2) * [73].

QUESTIONS.

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WAR OFFICE (AUXILIARY FORCES)—THE VOLUNTEERS—PURCHASE OF CONDEMNED ACCOUTREMENTS, &c.

Mr. BOORD (Greenwich) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is the fact that officers commanding Volunteer Regiments are refused permission to purchase accoutrements and stores which, although condemned as unfit for the Regular Forces, are serviceable for the Volunteers; whether such accoutrements are sold by auction for a trifling sum, and are regularly bought up by certain Jewish firms to whom Volunteer Officers who inquire for them are referred; and, whether, by this means, the cost of such articles to Volunteers is raised by nearly 600 per cent?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Accoutrements returned by the troops are in a very bad state, as a rule, and they are not sold until those which are considered worth repairing are picked out for issue to the Militia. The remainder are sold in large lots, and realize very small prices. I doubt very much whether, even with the most careful picking out, any of them would be found to be of use to the Volunteers. But I will undertake to look into the matter.

Mr. BOORD asked, Whether it was not the case that Volunteer officers wishing to purchase such articles were referred to the dealers to whom they were sold?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: I am not so informed; but I will make inquiries.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) asked, Whether it was not true that a great deal of the clothing sold was actually new, and had never been used by the troops at all; whether the stores were not brought from the different depôts to Woolwich, instead of being offered for sale in the neighbourhood of the depôts, where probably a better price would be given; and, whether the stores were not all sold in one or two large contracts, so as to shut out competition?

Mr. E. STANHOPE asked for notice of the Question.

Mr. BOORD said, he would call attention to the matter in Committee of Supply.

WAR OFFICE—THE WORKMEN AT ENFIELD AND WOOLWICH — SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1859.

COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether between 1859 and 1870, about 1,300 workmen were entered at Enfield and in the arsenal at Woolwich; whether, on the recommendation of the War Department, the Treasury, under the Superannuation Act of 1873, did, on the 4th of March, 1874, declare by Schedule that 829 of these workmen were entitled to the benefit of "The Superannuation Act, 1859," but omitted the remainder of such workmen in consequence of a War Office Circular dated the 17th of December, 1861; whether General Dixon, the Superintendent at Enfield, has expressed his belief that such Circular was not made known to the workmen, nor even sent to Enfield, until 12 years after its date; whether, at Woolwich Arsenal Carriage Department, the said Circular was omitted from the bound book of Circulars and from the Index, but has been pasted therein subsequently; whether, in the printed Rules and Regulations under which workmen were engaged at Woolwich between 1861 and 1870, nothing is mentioned of the Circular of 1861, and that it was not until 1870 that any indication of its effect for the first time appeared; whether, on behalf of the men omitted from the Schedule, it is solemnly asserted that they did not know of any Circular of 1861 until 1870, and that they are prepared to testify upon oath to that effect; whether Her Majesty's Government will grant an inquiry by any Committee of this House, or by any other independent method, into this serious allegation of non-publication; and, whether, if notification to the workmen be not proved previously to 1870, the War Department will recommend to the Treasury that the said workmen (entered before the 4th June, 1870) be admitted to their just rights under the Act of 1873, as in other Government Departments?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Without pledging myself to exact numbers, no doubt many thousand workmen were entered at Enfield and Woolwich between 1859 and 1870. In answer to the second Question, when the Treasury in March, 1874, declared 790 of these men entitled to the benefit of the Superannuation Act of 1859, their Lordships admitted all the claims which had been submitted to them. In answer to the third Question, there is no record in the War Office of any such statement as that referred to in the Question having been made by Colonel Dixon. In answer to the fourth Question, the Circular of December, 1861, governed the cases of men appointed up to its date, and is not in the book of circulars; but the Circular of August, 1861, which is the regulation applicable to all subsequent appointments and which governs the cases referred to in these Questions, is in its place both in the bound book and in the index. In answer to the fifth Question, there were no such printed Rules and Regulations under which workmen were engaged in the Royal Laboratory until 1870, nor in the Royal Carriage Department until 1872. There were such Rules in the Royal Gun Factories from 1860, but they contained no reference to superannuations. In answer to the sixth Question, the men now claiming do make the assertion referred to. The claims advocated by my hon. and gallant Friend have been fully investigated by successive Secretaries of State, and all agreed that the applicants had no just claim against the public; but I notice that my hon. and gallant Friend will have an opportunity shortly of raising the question in this House.

RIOTS, &c. (IRELAND)—DISTURBANCES AT MILTOWN MALBAY.

MR. PAULTON (Durham, Bishop Auckland) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If his attention has been drawn to the following report, published in *The Daily News* of 23rd February:—

> "An extraordinary demonstration was witnessed at Miltown Malbay yesterday, when the contents of 260 carts filled with turf, and a similar number containing potatoes, were distributed by the people of surrounding parishes to the families of the 11 men sentenced to a month's imprisonment under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act. Head Constable Bready, who was in charge of the police, ordered his men to draw their truncheons, and, presenting his revolver, ordered the crowds to disperse. The reason for this action is not reported. The people dispersed quietly. Several tons of potatoes were pitted;"

and, whether the facts are correctly stated; and, if so, whether the action of Head Constable Bready is approved by the Executive Government?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Inspector General of Constabulary informs me that the demonstration consisted of several thousand persons, with 300 carts, headed by a band. The local band also began to play through the town, followed by a large crowd. The magistrates at Petty Sessions having ordered that no band should be allowed to play in the streets on the occasion of the demonstration, the Head Constable went up to the band and warned them not to continue. Thereupon the crowd rushed upon the police in a threatening manner. The Head Constable considered it necessary to order his men to draw their truncheons, and he drew his revolver and called upon the people to desist. The ringleaders in the disturbance are being prosecuted.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Will the right hon. and gallant Gentleman say under what law are bands prohibited from playing through the streets?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: Under the law which gives power to the police to take any steps they think necessary to prevent anything likely to lead to a breach of the peace.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT—BOYCOTTING—CONVICTIONS AT ENNIS.

Mr. PAULTON (Durham, Bishop Auckland) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether 11 men—namely, Morgan, M'Inerney, O'Gorman, Rourke, Toole, Donnellon, Simon Coghlan, Michael Coghlan, Costello, Kelly, and Meade, were sentenced at Ennis, on the 22nd of February, to terms of imprisonment varying from four months to two months, with hard labour, for refusing to sell turf to the police; whether all these men lived at a distance of about 15 miles from the district in which the police were quartered; and, if so, whether the police had any right to requisition their turf; and, whether any limit is placed on the authority and discretion of the Constabulary in such proceedings?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, the Inspector General of Constabulary had reported that the persons named in the Question had been sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, from two to four months, some of them for refusing to sell turf to the police, and others for endeavouring to induce others not to sell, the police being Boycotted. None of them lived a distance of 15 miles from the police. Three lived about five miles distant, and the remainder within a quarter to two miles. The police had every right to ask these men to sell them turf, as they had exhibited turf for sale in various parts of the district.

Mr. PAULTON: Is the right hon. and gallant Gentleman aware that all these persons had regular customers for their turf in Ennis whom they were in the habit of supplying, and that if they failed to supply these persons with turf, they would have suffered the loss of their custom, a very serious loss to them?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I am informed that that is not the case.

Mr. COX (Clare, E.): Will the right hon. and gallant Gentleman say whether the police ever asked these men to supply them with turf before, and whether the only object of the police in asking for the turf on this particular occasion was to initiate a prosecution?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I do not know, and I do not think so.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): May I ask the right hon. and gallant Gentleman whether the police under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act have a right of pre-emption to the turf?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: No, Sir; they have only the regular right of everyone else.

POST OFFICE—GREENWICH TIME SIGNALS.

Mr. BOORD (Greenwich) asked the Postmaster General, Under what arrangement time signals are supplied by the Astronomer Royal from Greenwich; at what expense to his Department; and whether such arrangement is of a permanent character; and, what charges are made to the public for the supply of time signals; and what has been the amount annually received in respect of them by the Post Office since the arrangement was commenced?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to state that the Astronomer Royal does not himself supply time signals to the public. What he does is to supply signals to the Post Office by means of wires and apparatus provided by the Department. The Post Office distributes the signals to various Public Bodies and private persons throughout the Kingdom, on the terms and conditions set forth at page 311 of the *Post Office Guide*. The minimum charge in London is £15, and in the country £12. The gross annual revenue at present is about £1,300; and the amount has varied from about £230 to about £1,400 a-year since the telegraphs were transferred to the State. The arrangement with the Astronomer Royal may, I think, be regarded as permanent.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — CO. CLARE—MR. HICKSON, Q.C., TEMPORARY COUNTY COURT JUDGE

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland, Whether appeals from Resident Magistrates in County Clare have been decided by Mr. William Hickson, Q.C., a gentleman temporarily appointed to act in the absence of the County Court Judge; is he aware that Mr. Hickson is a member of the Dublin Constitutional Club, and that, since his confirmation of the sentences of Resident Magistrates, has attended a meeting of that Body; will the appeal, in the case of the hon. Member for East Clare (Mr. Cox), from a sentence by Resident Magistrates of four months' imprisonment, for a speech last October, be heard by Mr. Hickson; and, can arrangements be made by which coercion appeals shall be tried only by Judges not removable at the pleasure of the Executive?

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN) (Dublin University): The County Court Judge of Clare being during the last Session incapacitated from attending by reason of illness, the Lord Chancellor appointed Mr. Hickson, Q.C., as his *locum tenens*, and that gentleman accordingly discharged all the duties at the last Sessions, including, of course, the hearing of appeals from Resident Magistrates. The County Court Judge is now better, and he has not intimated to the Lord Chancellor that he will be unable to discharge the duties of his office in person at the next Sessions. Mr. Hickson is, I understand, a member of the Dublin Constitutional Club, and has attended its meetings. He is, I may add, an able and highly respected member of the Bar. In answer to the last paragraph of the Question, I have to state that it would not be possible to make any arrangements altering the statutory provisions as to appeals, which must in all cases of summary jurisdiction be made at the next Quarter Sessions called in the Division of the county in which the conviction has been made.

MR. DILLON: If a County Court Judge is not able to resume his duties at the next Quarter Sessions, is it not open to the Government to adjourn the appeals to a subsequent Sessions?

MR. MADDEN said, it was provided by statute that the appeals must be heard at the next Quarter Sessions; and the only thing which could be done by the Government was for the Lord Chancellor, by another statute, to allow them to be heard by the gentleman who was acting for the County Court Judge, as in the present case.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked, why the Government did not throw this duty on some other County Court Judge?

MR. MADDEN: The effect would be to take another County Court Judge from his own county. That would not get on with the work better.

COUNTY COURT ACTS—SUFFOLK.

MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the inquiry by the Lord Chancellor into the arrangements connected with the holding of County Courts in Suffolk has been brought to a conclusion; and, if so, with what result; and, whether he is able to give an assurance that the provisions of 9 & 10 Vict., c. 95, ss. 5, 6, as to monthly Courts, shall in future be strictly observed, as also the provisions of the County Court Acts relating to the notices of fixtures?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): The Lord Chancellor has been unable to conclude his inquiries, as the Judge is at present away on a holiday. The

Lord Chancellor informs me that the assurance asked for in the second paragraph of the Question can certainly be given.

ISLANDS OF THE PACIFIC—RAIATEA.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether any Report on the geographical position of Raiatea, and other Islands in the Pacific, whose independence, notwithstanding the Treaty of 1847, has been surrendered to the French, has been received from Admiral Fairfax; whether the said Islands are in the direct route to America, and contain splendid harbours; and, if he will lay any further Papers on the subject upon the Table of the House?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): No Report upon the Islands in question has been received from Rear Admiral Fairfax, and indeed they do not lie within the limits of his command, nor has any such Report been received of late years from any naval officer. Further Papers upon this subject are being prepared for Parliament.

LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)—POLICE BARRACKS AT BELLAGHY, CO. SLIGO.

MR. KENNEDY (Sligo, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he is aware of the police barracks at Bellaghy being changed to Charlestown, County Sligo; and, if so, would he explain for what reason; whether a Memorial has been sent to Dublin Castle, signed by the traders of Charlestown, against the change; whether he is aware that the barracks at Bellaghy was specially built for the purpose, at a cost of £400, the rent of which has been the principal support of the Widow Calleran since her husband's death; and, whether, under the circumstances, he will cause Bellaghy Barracks to be retained, it being quite close to Charlestown and equally as central?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, the new barracks at Charlestown were more central and nearer the business part. No Memorial had been received against the change, which had been favourably regarded by the majority of the inhabitants. The Local Constabulary Authorities were not aware whether the barracks at Bellaghy were specially built for the purpose; but they represented that the present owner was not solely dependent upon the rent for her support, as she had other house property. The Government, while regretting that Mrs. Calleran should be put to inconvenience, did not feel justified in causing the present barracks to be retained.

IRELAND—EJECTMENT IN CO. LONGFORD.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If the Government will give military or police assistance for the proposed ejectment of Widow Flood, of Forthill, County Longford, for arrears of a rent judicially reduced; has he seen *The Westmeath Examiner* of 21st January, containing the following report of the remarks of the County Court Judge, addressed to the agent at Ballymahon Quarter Sessions, in reference to the proceedings against this widow:—

> "A tenant whose rent was reduced last October from £15 8*s.* to £7, was sued for the rack-rent, which drew from the Judge the observation, 'Is it possible, Mr. Bole, that you are going on for the old rent after the Land Commissioners reducing it over 60 per cent? Surely you do not expect to recover these arrears from poor people.' Mr. Bole's reply was that he had no authority from his employer to wipe out any arrears;"

will any remonstrance be directed by the Executive to the landlord in the case, following the precedent of the letter of the last Chief Secretary to the Marquess of Clanricarde; does he propose, on behalf of the Government, to take any steps in the case; and, can he say who is the woman's landlord?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet): As the hon. and learned Member is perfectly well aware, I am the landlord in the case in question. No application has been made to the Government for military or police in the matter, nor is there any intention to execute the ejectment decree at present. I have seen the newspaper report referred to. Mr. Bole, however, denies that he made the statement attributed to him; on the contrary, he said that he would allow 20 per cent off the arrear in respect of the old rent, which would have brought it below the Poor Law valuation. The amount in the decree contained half a-year at the old rent only, and two years' judicial rent at £7 per annum. The Poor Law valuation of the farm is £12 15*s*., and, accordingly, an appeal has been lodged against the rent fixed. The tenant, however, has, of course, only been asked to pay the judicial rent from the date it was fixed. The letter to which the hon. and learned Member refers dealt with a proposal for carrying out wholesale evictions; but the writer distinctly contemplated the necessity of resorting to this process when the tenant declined to fulfil his legal obligation. As there is no question in this case of wholesale eviction, and as it may be hoped that there will be no eviction at all, there seems to be no parallel between the circumstances under which my right hon. Friend wrote the letter and those to which the hon. and learned Member refers to in his Question.

NEW SOUTH WALES—CELEBRATION OF THE CENTENNIAL.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, If he will lay upon the Table of the House the proceedings that took place in January last in Sydney, in celebration of the Centennial of New South Wales, including the united service held by the clergy and laity of the Church of England and the Presbyterian and Wesleyan Churches, and which was attended by His Excellency the Governor; and, whether he will take steps to secure a permament record of an event of so great interest?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): All the Centennial proceedings in Sydney will, without doubt, be fully recorded in the local Press; and any special notice taken by Her Majesty's Government of a particular religious celebration by one or two Churches would be disapproved in the Colony as being inconsistent with the absolute impartiality maintained by Her Majesty's Government towards all religious communities without distinction.

MR. JOHNSTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the service was joined in by the Jews and the Roman Catholics?

[No reply.]

INLAND REVENUE—EXCISE—THE DUTY ON SPIRITS.

SIR HENRY ROSCOE (Manchester, S.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether his attention has been called to the fact that, owing to the present faulty system of charging the duty upon spirits, a loss to the Revenue estimated at from £60,000 to £80,000 per annum is incurred without any corresponding advantage to the trader; whether this defect is well known and acknowledged by the Inland Revenue Department; whether his attention has been directed to a system proposed by Dr. Derham which, by substituting correct for incorrect tables, and a scientific and accurate instrument for an inexact one, will not only facilitate the work of the officials, but also, by yielding correct results at all temperatures, will give to the Revenue a sum equal to that mentioned above; and, whether, in view of the importance of this subject to the National Exchequer, he will consider the propriety of appointing a Departmental Committee to report on the method suggested by Dr. Derham?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I am informed that it is not the fact that there is a loss to the Exchequer of £60,000 to £80,000 per annum, as suggested by the hon. Baronet, owing to the faulty system of charging the duty upon spirits. No practical defect in the system is acknowledged by the Inland Revenue Department. Dr. Derham's system has been brought to my notice, and the merits of the principle of his instrument are recognized; but his estimate of the increase which would accrue to the Revenue by the adoption of his system is based upon erroneous assumptions. Sikes's hydrometer, which is the legalized instrument for charging the duty on spirits, is not only used by the Customs and Inland Revenue officers, but by the whole of the trade; and I am told that it would be as great a revolution to introduce Dr. Derham's instrument in its place, as it would be to introduce the decimal system in the place of our present coinage. I am also informed that Dr. Derham's instrument is of a delicate character, and not so well adapted as Sikes's hydrometer to be carried about on the rough journeys which the Revenue officers have to go through.

CIVIL SERVICE—EXAMINATIONS FOR LOWER DIVISION CLERKSHIPS.

MR. MAURICE HEALY (Cork) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Why the examinations for Lower Division clerkships in the Civil Service, usually held in or about January, May, and October, have been suspended; will these examinations be held in the future, as formerly, at regular intervals; when is it probable the next examination will be held; and, whether in consequence of the delay in holding such examinations, candidates who have been specially preparing for them, and who are now nearing the superior limit of age, will be disqualified if that limit be exceeded at the time of holding the next examination, and be thus deprived of their chance of entering the Public Service, through no fault of their own?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I answered a Question of the hon. Member for North Sligo (Mr. P. McDonald) to the same effect as this one on the 23rd ultimo; but I may repeat that these examinations are only held when required on account of vacancies which cannot be filled by means of transfers from other Departments, and that no date has been fixed for the next examination.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — MR O'MARA, HIGH SHERIFF OF LIMERICK (CITY.)

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been drawn to a statement in *The Times* of Monday last, alleging that a Mr. O'Mara, appearing to be High Sheriff of Limerick (City) and also President of the last meeting of the Limerick National League, is reported to have said to that meeting, in reference to the omission of his name from the Proclamation for holding the Limerick City Assizes, as follow:

> "He would tell the meeting what would be possible, and that was that he as High Sheriff could keep the Judge from the Court House because, though it might not be known, the Court House and all round it was in the custody of the High Sheriff for the time being, and a wink from him could keep the Judges a long time rapping at the gates before they got in;"

and, if the allegation be well founded, what steps the Government intend to take in view of such threats against the administration of justice by persons holding the honourable office of High Sheriff?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: My attention has been drawn to the statement in the Question; but I am unable to say whether the allegation is well founded or otherwise. There has, however, as yet been no interference with the administrstion of justice, and the Government do not, therefore, at present contemplate taking any steps in the matter.

METROPOLIS—THE RIVER THAMES—DEATHS FROM STARVATION, DROWNING, &c.

MR. KILBRIDE (Kerry, S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If he will state the number of persons who were shown upon medical evidence before Coroners' Juries to have died from want and exposure during the year 1887 in London, and in the other parts of England; and, if he can state the number of persons whose bodies were found in the Thames in the same period, with regard to whom Coroners' Juries were unable to find whether they had met their deaths by murder, suicide, or accident?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam) (who replied) said, that a Return was now in course of preparation showing the number of deaths in the year 1887 in the Metropolitan District, upon which Coroners' Juries had returned verdicts that they were due to starvation or were deaths accelerated by privation. The Coroners' Returns would furnish the necessary information with regard to the other parts of England. As to bodies found in the Thames within the City of London and the Metropolitan District, there would be no objection on the part of the Government to furnish a Return.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND) — GRATUITY TO DISCHARGED PRISONERS.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether four men from Balliferritter, named respectively Pat Keane, Michael Ferriter, John Devine, and James Higgins, when discharged from Tralee Gaol on the 16th of February, were only tendered 1*s.* 2½*d.* among them to defray the expenses of their journey home, over 45 miles of a snow covered road; why was not some more adequate sum offered to these men; and, what is the usual practice in such cases?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The prisoners named were released on the morning of the 16th February after breakfast. They were not tendered among them the amount alleged, but were each handed 4*s.* The Governor of the Tralee Prison states it is the practice there to send old men, women, and juveniles home by public conveyance when available; but that as the prisoners in question were all young men, and had voluntarily submitted themselves to imprisonment rather than give bail, he did not consider himself justified in adopting this course in their case.

THE SWEATING SYSTEM.

Mr. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether it will be possible for a Joint Committee of both Houses to be appointed to inquire into the Sweating System; and, if not, whether the Government will undertake that the Lords Report shall be communicated to the Commons?

The PRESIDENT (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) (Bristol, W.): I am much obliged to the hon. Member for calling my attention to the matter; but, on inquiry, I find that it is now too late to adopt his suggestion. I will, however, take care that the suggestion made in the latter part of the Question is given effect to.

EMIGRATION — REMITTANCES FROM UNITED STATES, CANADA, AND AUSTRALIA.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the President of the Board of Trade, in reference to the statement on page 18 of the Papers relating to Emigration (1887), wherein it is stated that the amount of money remitted by settlers in the United States and Canada to their Friends in the United Kingdom in each year from 1848 to 1887 amounted to £34,040,564, and from Australia from 1875 to 1887 amounted to £772,909, Does this amount include small postal and money orders; and, if so, is he aware that the poor and middle class people in Australia sent to their friends and relatives in this country during the past two years no less a sum than £700,000 in money orders, in value from 10*s.* to £10; and, how he reconciles the statement in the Return with the last-named fact?

The PRESIDENT (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) (Bristol, W.): The amount of money stated in the Return as remitted by settlers abroad or in the Colonies to their friends in the United Kingdom does not include sums remitted by small postal and money orders. The Post Office, on being applied to by the Board of Trade for the information for the year 1887, stated that they were unable to furnish it. In 1881 and 1882 Mr. Giffen stated, in his Report to the Board of Trade upon Emigration Statistics, that the data with regard to these remittances were necessarily so incomplete that it was doubtful whether it was ever worth while to publish the figures, or whether it was worth while any longer to continue them. I am obliged to the hon. Member for calling my attention to the matter. I think inaccurate statistics are only misleading, and propose to cease the publication of Tables VII. and VII.A in this Return, unless some good reason to the contrary can be shown.

POST OFFICE — UNIFORM POSTAGE STAMP FOR GREAT BRITAIN AND HER COLONIES.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Postmaster General, Has he taken into consideration the desirability of introducing a uniform postage stamp for Great Britain and her Colonies, and, in fact, every part of the Empire?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): I have considered the question referred to by the hon. Member, and I find that a uniform postage stamp for the British Empire is not practicable, mainly because the revenues of the United Kingdom and of her Colonies being separate, most laborious accounts would be required properly to apportion the receipts. There are other objections which I could not conveniently explain within the limits of an answer to the hon. Member; but I may say that they were such as to convince Mr. Fawcett, when he held the Office which I now occupy, that a uniform postage stamp could not be adopted.

IRELAND—THE LOAN FUND BOARD AT CASHEL.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) (for Mr. CONDON) (Tipperary, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the printing for the Loan Fund Board at Cashel was formerly done by a local firm; whether by an Order of the Loan Fund Inspector the Cashel Board have been compelled to send their printing to the Dublin Castle printers; whether the work now costs about double the amount for which it was formerly done; and, whether, under these circumstances, he will order that the work be given to the local firm in the future?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, some Members of the Local Loan Fund Board having provided themselves with forms which were not legal, and others which were not uniform, the Board considered it advisable to keep in stock documents, so as to secure that only those which were legal and uniform should be used. No compulsion was used on the Society in the matter; but they, in common with other similar Societies, seeing the advantage to be derived from it, voluntarily adopted the present system of having the printing done; but they were at perfect liberty to discontinue it, if they thought it desirable to do so. Whether the forms printed by the Dublin Castle printers cost more than those printed by local firms he was unable to say.

LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)—EXTRA POLICE IN DUBLIN COUNTY.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant for Ireland, Whether an extra police force of two men has recently been stationed in each of three districts of the County of Dublin—namely, Rolestown, Ballyboghill, and Swords; if so, why has this addition been made to the already heavy burden of taxation borne by the people of those districts; and, whether in those districts of North Dublin there has been for years a single outrage, or attempted outrage, of any kind whatever?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, the Inspector General reported that it was the case that the police force in the three places named had been recently increased by two men each; but it was not the case that any additional burden had been thrown on the people thereby. As regarded the last paragraph of the Question, he was informed that during the last seven years there had been six outrages in these districts.

LABOURERS (IRELAND) ACT — THE CELBRIDGE UNION, CO. KILDARE.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) (for Mr. CAREW) (Kildare, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to a Report in *The Leinster Leader* of the 25th of February last, wherein it is stated that in the case of the Celbridge Union, in the County of Kildare, the Privy Council granted every Petition lodged against the erection of labourers' cottages in that union; whether they heard the evidence of the objectors and decided thereon, without giving any notice to the Guardians of the Poor, or without giving them any opportunity of disproving the evidence of the objectors; and, whether, considering the difficulties thrown in the way of the erection of labourers' cottages, he will take steps to facilitate the Boards of Guardians in securing dwellings for the labourers?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I am informed that three Petitions against the erection of labourers' cottages in Celbridge Union were heard before the Privy Council on the 18th of February, who allowed the objections, after hearing fully counsel and witnesses on both sides. The Guardians had both full notice of the hearing, were represented at it by counsel, and their witnesses were examined in the several cases. I cannot allow that any difficulties are thrown in the way of Boards of Guardians in securing dwellings for the labourers in any cases where a feasible and fair scheme is submitted to the authorities.

LAW AND POLICE—THE SALVATION ARMY IN TORQUAY.

MR. MALLOCK (Devon, Torquay) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether his attention had been called to a statement in *The Times* of the 9th of March, to the effect that 15 members of the Salvation Army in Torquay have been sentenced under a Local Act, entitled "The Torquay Harbour and District Act, 1886," to terms of imprisonment varying from a fortnight to one month, for taking part on the last four Sundays in street processions with instrumental music; and, whether he can inform him in what other places in England besides Torquay any Local Act is in force under which persons could be punished for similar proceedings?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.) (who replied) said: Yes, Sir; my attention has been called to the facts stated in the Question. The Eastbourne Improvement Act, 1885, has a provision in terms similar to those of the Torquay Harbour and District Act. My hon. Friend will find provisions substantially the same in the Local Acts for Hastings and Carlisle.

METROPOLITAN POLICE—POLICE CONSTABLE 98A.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether any, and which, police constable received pay in the Metropolis during any part of the month of November, 1887, under the letter and number 98A; and, whether any, and which, of the pay sheets of the A Division for the month of November contains any entry of pay to, and signed for by, any constable against such letter and number?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I am informed by the Commissioners of Police that Sergeant Flood received pay under the letter and number 98A up to November 20, 1887. The pay-sheets of the Criminal Investigation Department contain Flood's name up to November 20 under this number and letter. His signature is on a separate document, as he was abroad.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) ACTS—CASE OF COW DISEASE IN WILTSHIRE.

MR. PICTON (Leicester) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Agriculture, Whether a case of cow disease occurring in Wiltshire was investigated by Professor Crookshank, of the Bacteriological Laboratory, at the request of the Agricultural Department of the Privy Council; whether he arrived at the conclusion that the disease was identical with the Hendon outbreak, to which the Report of the Local Government Board for 1886 (pp. xiv. xv.) attributed the generation of scarlet fever among the consumers of the milk of the affected cows; whether he expressed a conviction that the disease was in both cases the true Jennerian cow-pox; and, whether he has identified certain micro-organisms (particularly streptococcus pyogenes) as occurring in both instances, and also in vaccine virus, in erysipelas, in pyæmia, and other infective diseases?

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL (A LORD of the TREASURY) (Wigton) (who replied) said: Some months ago Professor Brown was instructed to make an inquiry as to the existence among cows of an eruptive disease of the teats which it was alleged in one case—the Hendon outbreak—had induced scarlatina in man by the agency of the milk. In the course of the inquiry he availed himself of Professor Crookshank's offered assistance in working out the micro-pathology of the affection. In regard to the outbreak in Wiltshire, Professsor Crookshank has stated that he considered the disease was the Jennerian cow-pox. Professor Crookshank has not yet furnished a Report on the micro-organism of the cow-disease. A Report on the whole subject is now being prepared, and will be issued as soon as possible by the Agricultural Department.

VACCINATION—THE REV. T. MAINE, ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE.

MR. PICTON (Leicester) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If his attention has been called to the case of the Rev. Thomas Maine, a Baptist minister of Ashton-under-Lyne, who, on the 9th of February, was summoned before the magistrates for neglect to have his child vaccinated; whether it is a fact that the summons was signed and issued by Dr. Cork, a public vaccinator for part of the borough of Ashton; and whether, when Mr. Maine appeared, Dr. Cork and also Mr. John Fletcher, a member of the prosecuting Board of Guardians, sat as magistrates on the Bench; whether Mr. Maine raised the objection that two interested persons were sitting in judgment on him; and whether this objection was ignored; and, whether, having regard to the decision of the Queen's Bench in 1879, on the case of "Betts and Co. *v.* Milledge, Robins, and others," Justices of Weymouth, he will take means to prevent in such cases the possibility of trial by a Bench partly composed of magistrates having a professional or official interest in the success of the prosecution?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I have received a Report from the Justices as to the case of the Rev. T. Maine, of Ashton-under-Lyne. The summons was signed and issued by Dr. Cooke (not Dr. Cork); but he is not a public vaccinator for any part of the borough of Ashton, or for any other place. Dr. Cooke and Mr. Fletcher (not Mr. John Fletcher, who was Chairman of the Board of Guardians when the order to prosecute was made) sat as magistrates on the Bench when the order to vaccinate the child was made. Mr. Fletcher is, I understand, a member of the Board. Mr. Maine did not raise the objection then. He did so on a subsequent occasion a month later, when he was fined for not complying with the order. On this latter occasion none of the magistrates present were members of the Board of Guardians. Had he objected on the former occasion, I am informed by the Justices' clerk that Mr. Fletcher would, no doubt, have retired from the Bench. I have already called the attention of the Bench to the Question of the hon. Member and the case cited, and I do not think any further interference on my part is necessary.

SOUTH AFRICA—THE TRANSVAAL GOVERNMENT.

MR. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether there is an authorised or accredited Agent from the Transvaal Government resident in this country; and, if so, who is that Agent?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) is Consul General in Great Britain for the South African Republic.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—PERCENTAGE—REDUCTION OF JUDICIAL RENTS.

MR. BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If the Irish Land Commission stated that the percentage of reduction granted by them to judicial tenants under "The Land Law (Ireland) Amendment Act, 1887," would only apply to the half-year ending the 1st of November, 1887; whether this opinion was also expressed by Mr. Kisbey, in giving judgment in "Lord Lurgan *v.* Heaney and others," at Lurgan Quarter Sessions in January last; and, whether Baron Dowse, on appeal from Mr. Kisbey's decision, reversed the judgment against Heaney, and gave the percentage of Land Commission reduction for the whole year ending November, 1887; and, if so, would the Government give proper publicity to the interpretation given by Baron Dowse to the Act of 1887, and have balances refunded to tenants who have only got a half-year's reduction?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Land Commissioners, in a Minute which they prepared and circulated in connection with the alteration of rents prescribed by their Order of the 23rd of December, 1887, explained that the revision of rent provided for by the 29th section of the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1887, and by the Order of the 23rd of December, 1887, refers only to the rent payable in respect of the year commencing from the gale day next before the 23rd of August, 1887, and does not effect prior arrears of rent. Neither the Government nor the Land Commissioners are aware of the case referred to; and the Commissioners have not heard that a view contrary to what they have indicated was ever expressed by a judicial person. The hon. Member will probably find, upon inquiry, that the case he alludes to was one which can in no way affect the general principle laid down by the Commissioners, which is in accordance with the explicit terms of the statute.

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)—ELECTION OF GUARDIANS—QUESTION OF VOTING PAPERS.

Mr. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether complaints have reached him that the overseers omitted to send voting papers to the occupiers in Cavendish Buildings, Clerkenwell Road, E.C., for the election of Guardians last year and the year before; whether the Local Government Board has received a request from one of the occupiers in Cavendish Buildings that they would take steps to prevent the recurrence of this omission for the future; whether they have taken such steps; and, if not, whether they will do so at once, before the next election, which will shortly take place; and, whether they will send a general Circular to the overseers in the Metropolis reminding them to send voting papers to all the occupiers in artizans' dwellings?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Ritchie) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): In November last one of the occupiers of Cavendish Buildings made inquiry why at the last election of Guardians, which took place more than six months previously, voting papers were not supplied to the occupiers of the buildings referred to. The Board are informed by the returning officer that, so far as he can ascertain, voting papers have always been sent to the occupiers of artizans' dwellings in the Holborn Union who are entitled to vote in the election of Guardians. No complaint in this matter has been made to him or to the overseers by any occupier of these buildings. There are at present no facts before me which show that there is any necessity for any such communication as is suggested.

LAW AND JUSTICE—THE BADSWORTH POACHING AFFRAY.

Mr. SUMMERS (Huddersfield) asked the Secretary for State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the following statement, which appeared in the *Leeds Mercury* of Tuesday, 6th March:—

> "The brother of Edward George Copley states that the deceased had given him the following account of the Badsworth affray before he died: 'The poachers went away. Illingworth sent me one way, he went the other. When I came in sight of them again they were struggling together. The young fellow (Pilmore) placed the gun on the grass, and then went to assist his mate. When I got within a few yards of them the young fellow and I both made for the gun. He succeeded in getting to it first; and as I rushed at him the gun went off as he was picking it up, before I knew where I was;'"

and, whether he has any reason to believe the correctness or otherwise of the paragraph in question?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): The man has been respited. Had it been otherwise I should have been unable to answer this Question. It would be impossible for the Secretary of State to perform his duty in the consideration of these cases if, before his decision is announced, he is to be called upon to explain to the House what weight he attaches to this or that statement for or against the prisoner. In the present instance the statement was not evidence at all, but mere newspaper gossip, without any foundation in fact.

BRITISH GUIANA—REPORT OF MR. McTURK—THE BOUNDARY QUESTION.

Mr. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he has received the Report of Mr. McTurk, with reference to his recent visit to the Yurnari, at the request of the Governor of British Guiana; and, whether the Government are now prepared to state what action they propose to take with reference to the territory in dispute between Great Britain and Venezuela?

Mr. HANBURY-TRACY (Montgomery, &c.) also had the following Question on the Paper:—To ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If it is true that the Foreign Affairs Committee of the American House of Representatives has reported, and the House has adopted, the following Resolution :—

> "Whereas there are pending questions of disputed boundary between Venezuela and the Colony of British Guiana, and whereas it is alleged that the British Government has made claim for the said Colony to a considerable portion of valuable territory now and heretofore in the possession of Venezuela, and has refused to submit to arbitration the said questions of disputed boundary, it is resolved that the President be requested to send to the House, if not incompatible with the public interest, all documents and correspondence between our Government and Great Britain or Venezuela relating to the said questions of disputed boundary;"

and, whether, Her Majesty's Government having stated that they are not opposed to the principle of arbitration, he will state what steps have been taken, or are about to be taken, to bring about a settlement of the dispute?

THE UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): I will, with the permission of the House, answer at the same time the Question of the hon. Member for the Montgomery Boroughs (Mr. Hanbury-Tracy.) Her Majesty's Government are not informed that the American House of Representatives has passed the Resolution referred to. The Report of Mr McTurk upon his recent journey into the Yurnari District has been received; but I am not in a position to make any statement in regard to it, or upon the question of arbitration concerning the territory.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—SUB-COMMISSIONS IN WEXFORD.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What is the cause of the delay in appointing a day for the sitting of the Sub-Commission in the County Wexford to fix the fair rents; can he name a day for the next sitting; and, will the cases of all the tenants in County Wexford, whose originating notices were served before the 1st of November last, be fixed for the next sitting?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, the Land Commissioners informed him that there had been no unusual delay respecting the sitting of the Sub-Commission for the County of Wexford. The Sub-Commission would commence their sittings in Waterford at Carrick-on-Suir on the 4th of next month, and the date upon which they would open in New Ross would be fixed by their Chairman as soon after that date as possible. The Commissioners stated that it was not the practice, having regard to the length of the sittings in other districts, to fix the date of the next sitting in any other way. He was not aware that there was any unusual delay.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Can the right hon. and gallant Gentleman say why there should be any delay? What is the unusual delay?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN said, that any delay that was unusual was rendered so by the unusual number of applications, which made it impossible to prevent the business falling into arrear.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—FAIR RENTS—DELAYS.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What is the explanation of the delays in hearing fair rent cases in Ireland; is he aware that the landlords are taking advantage of this delay to serve eviction notices under Section 7 of last year's Act, for arrears accruing due since the originating notices were served, plus the previous half-year's rent, which destroys the tenant's right to go into the Land Court; can any steps be taken so that at least one Sub-Commission shall be appointed to operate in every county; will the Government compensate in any way tenants whose rights have been lost by these delays; have they seen the observations of Lord Chief Baron Palles, in a case of "Kilkelly *v.* Brennan," as to the complications that would arise unless the Executive took steps to expedite the hearing of land cases; and, how many fair rent notices have yet to be heard, and what is the average rate per month at which they are being disposed of? He would also ask what remedy the Government were going to apply?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Land Commissioners inform me that there is no unnecessary delay in hearing fair rent cases, all the Sub-Commissioners being steadily at work in their various districts. They are not aware whether landlords are taking advantage, where fair rent applications are not disposed of, to serve eviction notices under Section 7 of last year's Act. But they apprehend that the service of such notice would not destroy the tenant's right to have a fair rent fixed if he should redeem. It is their practice not to dismiss an originating notice in cases where an eviction notice has been served, but to adjourn it pending the time for redemption. The Government are at present considering the question of increasing the number of Sub-Commissioners. They are not aware of any cases in which tenants have lost their rights through the non-hearing of their applications. They have not seen the observations attributed to the Lord Chief Baron. There are in all 58,839 fair rent applications now pending in the Court of the Land Commission, this number being mainly due to the Act of last Session admitting leaseholders and attracting a large accession of yearly tenants by reason of the provision which made the judicial rent run from the gale day after the application instead of after the order fixing the rent. The number of cases pending on August 1, 1887, was only 11,075. The average rate per month at which these cases are being disposed of is about 2,000.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: If that is the case, does it not follow that it will be a year and a-half before many of them are reached? I would like, under these circumstances, if the Land Commission have furnished the right hon. and gallant Gentleman with the information, an answer as to the relative number of Sub-Commissioners at present, and the number of cases as compared with what was done in 1884. Are there as many Sub-Commissioners now in operation as compared with 1881, when the Land Act was passed?

Colonel KING-HARMAN repeated that the Government were considering the question of appointing fresh Sub-Commissioners, and they were consulting with the Treasury on the subject. The matter would be disposed of as soon as possible.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): How many new Sub-Commissioners have there been appointed since the Act of last year?

Colonel KING-HARMAN said, he could not answer that Question.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE said, he would ask a Question on the subject.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said, that as the Land Commissioners had denied that that they had absolutely dismissed any of these cases under Section 7, he begged to give Notice that on an early day, or on the consideration of the Vote—if it was taken at an early day—he would call attention to several cases, notably on the Mitchelstown Estate, and in the County of Louth, in which the Land Commission must be well aware that the fact of postponing the hearing of the fair rent applications has resulted in the tenants being evicted.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): May I ask the right hon. and gallant Gentleman how many such Commissions are working now?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: There are 12 such Commissions; I think I am right in saying 12.

NATIONAL DEBT (CONVERSION) BILL —CONVERSION BY TRUSTEES.

Sir JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If he will inform the House what the special arrangements are which he proposes to make to meet the case of Trustees who may have to decide on the question of conversion of Trust Funds?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The Bill enables the Treasury to make Rules prescribing the evidence to be required of a person being a Trustee, and authorizes the Bank to accept and act on the evidence so prescribed, and expressly declares that the Bank is not to be affected with notice of any Trust. This will, I hope, remove the difficulties foreseen by the hon. Baronet. The Bill will be in the hands of hon. Members to-morrow.

COLONIZATION—THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S CIRCULAR.

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether he will be good enough to telegraph or write to such of the Colonies as have not yet responded to the Secretary of State's Circular Despatch of September last on the subject of Colonization, and urge them to reply?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): Replies have been received from all the Colonies addressed except Newfoundland, New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania; and these have been reminded by a despatch dated the 23rd ultimo.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—EXPENSES OF SUB-POSTMASTERS.

Mr. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether it is the case that Sub-Postmasters in Ireland have to provide the fittings of their offices out of their small salaries; and, whether it is the fact that they have also to provide the stationery, &c. required for their offices; and, if so, will any steps be taken to remedy this unfair treatment of the Sub-Postmasters?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): Every Sub-Postmaster is required to provide an office, with such fittings as are necessary—usually costing very little—as a condition of his appointment, and Sub-Postmasters in Ireland hold their situations precisely upon the same terms in this respect, and are paid upon the same scale, as Sub-Postmasters in England and Scotland. I will make inquiry into the subject raised by the hon. Member's second Question, and shall be glad if I can relieve Sub-Postmasters from such payments in case they appear to amount to an appreciable sum.

CHINA—THE CHEFOO CONVENTION—DETENTION OF A BRITISH STEAMER.

Sir RICHARD TEMPLE (Worcester, Evesham) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether a British steamer has been detained by the Local Chinese Authorities at Tchang, near the rapids of the Yangtsze, contrary to the provisions of the Chefoo Convention, notwithstanding that the season for the vessel ascending the river is becoming urgent?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): The information that has reached the Foreign Office is not in accordance with the terms of my hon. Friend's Question. Her Majesty's Minister in China has lately been exerting himself strenuously to induce the Chinese Government to sanction the projected voyage of a steamer to Chung K'ing, to which the Government and the British Consul in that district state that there is strong opposition from the Local Authorities and population. Sir John Walsham will continue his endeavours to overcome the hesitation of the Chinese Government.

MARGARINE ACT, 1887—FINES IN DUBLIN.

Mr. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If it is true, as reported in a Dublin newspaper, that the Lord Lieutenant, on Memorials, reduced two fines of £10 each, imposed by a Dublin police magistrate, for offences against the Margarine Act of last Session to £2 each?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: It is the case that the Lord Lieutenant, on Memorials, reduced the fines in question as stated. The Act under which the fines were imposed had only come into force on the 1st of January; and having regard to the circumstances in these cases brought under the notice of his Excellency he considered that a substantial reduction of the penalties should be made, and in this the magistrate who tried the cases concurred.

Mr. MURPHY asked, would the right hon. and gallant Gentleman inform the House why, if those people had a right to appeal, they were not allowed to use that right; and why such a remedy as that described had been resorted to in lieu of the right of appeal?

Colonel KING-HARMAN said, that the Act only came into operation this year.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Might I ask why the same course was not taken when the new Law of Coercion came into operation?

[No reply.]

ARMY MEDICAL SERVICE—RELATIVE RANK.

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he has received from the British Medical Association a statement containing an analysis of the opinions of nearly 1,200 Army medical officers, with reference to the recent abolition of relative rank; whether a wide-spread feeling of dissatisfaction has thus been shown to exist throughout the Department; and, whether, under these circumstances, he will bring on Vote IV. of the Army Estimates at a time which will admit of full discussion?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I have received a communication purporting to give the anonymous opinions of several hundred medical officers. These opinions must have been obtained and expressed in a manner altogether in contravention of military discipline. Medical officers, like other officers, have a proper channel through which they can be heard; and I am not prepared to accept any Civilian Association as their mouthpiece. On the general question of rank I can only repeat what I said several times last year—namely, that the status of medical officers is just as it was before; and that, as regards titular rank, they already hold professional titles for which the exchange to combatant titles, without combatant functions, would be a loss of personal influence.

DR. FARQUHARSON said, he would draw attention to this subject on the Medical Vote.

THE CONSTABULARY FORCES—SUPERANNUATION.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, When he will be able to fulfil the promises of his Predecessors in the submission of legislation on the superannuation of the Constabulary Forces?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): It is impossible to fix a time beforehand; but my hope is to introduce a Bill in the course of the present Session.

NAVY—MERCHANT STEAMERS AS ARMED CRUISERS.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, What is the total amount of money to be paid this year for the mail steamers to America and Australia for the call on their services as armed cruisers; the number of vessels so under call; what steps, if any, are being taken to train the officers and men of these steamers in naval warfare; and, have the Government taken into consideration, and with what result, the condition of the Mercantile Marine, with a view to its more complete utilization as a Reserve for the Royal Navy?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): The anticipated payment in subventions for 1888-9 is £22,380. This payment is on six ships; but by an arrangement with the owners nine others are at the disposition of the Admiralty for purchase or hire when required. Unless they happen to belong to the Royal Naval Reserve no steps are taken for the training of the officers and men of these ships in naval warfare; but it has been arranged that at least half of the crews should belong to the Royal Naval Reserve in the steamers to America, and another arrangement has been made for the remaining steamers. The pick of the Mercantile Fleet is already on the Admiralty list, and can be requisitioned when required; and by means of the Royal Naval Reserve the services of such portion of its *personnel* as may be willing to serve in the Navy in the event of war are already at the disposal of the Admiralty. No further development of this principle is at present contemplated.

CHURCH REVENUES—THE RETURN.

MR. PICTON (Leicester) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If he would be good enough to inform the House what progress has been made with the Return of Church Revenues granted last Session on the Motion of the Right honourable J. G. Hubbard (now Lord Addington), and when it may be expected to be completed?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam) (who replied) said: In my answer given on the 5th of March in this House to the hon. Member for East Northamptonshire (Mr. Channing) I explained the great magnitude of the work of preparing this Report, and declined to forecast the date of its completion. I have nothing to add to that reply.

MR. PICTON asked, whether any steps had been taken to expedite the completion of this Return?

MR. STUART-WORTLEY: Elaborate inquiries have been addressed to no less than 14,000 incumbents of benefices, and some 12,000 replies have been received. Many of the replies are imperfect.

IRISH NEWSPAPERS—GOVERNMENT ADVERTISEMENTS.

MR. T. P. GILL (Louth, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with reference to the following Memorandum respecting Government advertisements in Ireland:—

> "The advocacy of particular opinions is not in itself a sufficient reason for giving or withholding Government advertisements; but the benefit of the doubt should always be given in favour of papers supporting law and order; the fact that a particular paper is Boycotted is strong ground for giving it Government advertisements, and a conclusive ground for not withdrawing them if already given; no Government advertisements must, under any circumstances, be given to any newspaper that violates the law,"

Whether by newspapers not supporting law and order the Nationalist Press is meant; whether his attention has been called to the following statement of the Secretary to the Treasury, made in Committee of Supply last Session:—

> "He proposed to go through the list [of newspapers to which the Civil Service Commissioners gave advertisements], and if necessary insert National papers, and he must say at once that they ought to be given a share of the advertisements, so that those who read the newspapers in Ireland to a large extent should have an opportunity of seeing these advertisements;"

and, whether, if the foregoing Memorandum has been issued, and the National newspapers be those to which the Chief Secretary refers, he will, in view of this statement of the Secretary to the Treasury, cause it to be withdrawn forthwith?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I do not feel called upon to answer any Question with regard to alleged Circulars which must either be forgeries or have been obtained through breach of confidence of some person to whom they were entrusted. In any case I fail to see any inconsistency between the alleged Circular and the statement made by the Financial Secretary.

WAR OFFICE—WAR DEPARTMENT WORKS (IRELAND).

MR. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether all the cement used for War Department Works in Ireland is imported from England; whether he is aware that cement is manufactured in the neighbourhood of Dublin and in Wexford, which is largely used, amongst others, by the Dublin Port and Docks Board and the Irish Board of Works; and, will directions be given to the Royal Engineer Department in Ireland to have tests of these cements made in the presence of the manufacturer's agents; and, if the tests are satisfactory and the price suitable, to favourably consider the use of the Irish material?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. BRODRICK) (Surrey, Guildford) (who replied) said: It is not known where the cement comes from which is used in War Department works, as a contractor may get his cement in Ireland or elsewhere, provided it pass the specified tests.

FRANCHISE ACT (IRELAND), 1884—REMUNERATION TO CLERKS OF UNIONS.

MR. P. J. O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he is aware that the Boards of Guardians of several Unions in Ireland have declined to provide any remuneration out of the rates for the compulsory services rendered by Clerks of Unions and Poor Rate Collectors under the Franchise Act of 1884, on the grounds that such remuneration should be provided from Imperial funds; and, if so, whether, under these circumstances, he will consider the justice and propriety of making provision in the Estimates for the payment to these public servants in respect of the duties in question, which they are called on, under penalty, to discharge?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The question of the remuneration of Poor Law officials in Ireland for their services under the Franchise Act has been for some time engaging the attention of the Government, and the Government intend at an early date to take steps in the matter. They cannot hope, however, to undertake to ask Parliament to sanction remuneration to these officials as an extra charge on the Imperial funds.

STATES AND COLONIES OF SOUTH AFRICA—THE RECENT CONFERENCE.

SIR GEORGE BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether Her Majesty's Government intend to present to Parliament any account of the proceedings of the Conference recently held in Cape Town to determine on common action in reference to Customs Duties, Railway Extension, and other matters of common concern to the States and Colonies of South Africa; and, whether it is proposed that Basutoland, Bechuanaland, and other portions of South Africa, still under Imperial control or administration, should take part in any common action that may result from the said Conference?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Report of the proceedings at the Conference at Cape Town has not yet been received; but Her Majesty's Government are not aware of any reason why it should not be communicated to Parliament in due course. No proposals have come before Her Majesty's Government for the inclusion of Basutoland or Buchuanaland in any arrangements for common action that may be adopted; and it is not possible, without further information, to express an opinion upon the point raised in the hon. Member's Question.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION — LEASEHOLDERS IN CASTLEDERG, COUNTY TYRONE.

LORD ERNEST HAMILTON (Tyrone, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he is aware that in the neighbourhood of Castlederg, County Tyrone, a great number of leaseholders are waiting to have their rents adjusted; and, whether he can give any information as to when a Land Court is likely to sit in that neighbourhood?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Land Commissioners inform me there are 202 tenants in the Castlederg Union waiting to have their applications heard, of which probably one-third are leaseholders. A Sub-Commission will commence its sitting for County Tyrone on May 1. In answering the Question of the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell), as to the number of Sub-Commissions, I might have added that each Sub-Commission now comprises five members instead of three, as formerly.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I would like to ask the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, whether it is not a fact that there is in the Estimates for this year a reduction in the amount for the Land Commission of £54,000 compared with last year, and that the number of Sub-Commissioners estimated for is 20 less than last year; while, at the same time, there is an extraordinary increase in the number of applications by tenants to have their rents fixed?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Might I ask the right hon. and gallant Gentleman whether no Sub-Commission will commence to sit in Tyrone till the 1st of May?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: That is the date furnished to me by the Land Commissioners.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Might I ask the Chief Secretary, whether he will give his personal attention to the position the tenants are placed in by the delay in hearing their applications?

MR. T. M. HEALY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury—for this is a most important question—whether in the Estimates for the coming year there is a reduction of £54,000, as compared with last year, in the amount for the Irish Land Commission; and whether there is provision made for the salaries of 20 Sub-Commissioners less than last year; and, whether that has been done by the Treasury in view of the fact that 113,000 leaseholders have entered applications to have their rents fixed?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): The answer to that Question is a very simple one. The Land Commission terminates, as hon. Members are aware, by law in August next, and we made provision only up to the date when the Commission would terminate. If the Commission is extended further than that time, of course provision will have to be made for the amount required.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: How does that account for the reduced number of Sub-Commissioners estimated for between this and August next?

Mr. JACKSON: I do not quite catch the Question.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I wish to ask, whether the fact that the Land Commission is by law terminated in August next necessitates a reduction in the number of Sub-Commissioners between this and August next?

Mr. JACKSON: I am not aware that there is any reduction in the number of Sub-Commissioners.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: There are 20 less than last year.

Mr. JACKSON: Twenty less than the estimated number, though there has been no reduction in the number of Sub-Commissioners are far as I am aware.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): Might I ask, whether or not it is the intention of the Irish Government to continue the Land Commission beyond the date at which it now by law concludes; also, whether that decision was not arrived at before the Estimates were framed; and, if so, whether the Estimates ought not to have been framed upon that decision?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I am not intimately acquainted with the practice of the Treasury in this matter; but I believe that it is not usual to put on the Estimates sums which require Parliamentary sanction before they could be voted. The Land Commission naturally expires on the 1st of August. Of course, before that date the Government will come down to Parliament and ask their views as to how the Land Commission should be dealt with in the future. But until Parliament has given its sanction to the proposals of the Government, or some other proposals, it would be improper to put on the Estimates the additional sums required.

Mr. CHILDERS: But when the Poor Law Commission had to be extended from year to year it was always the custom to ask in the Estimates for the full amount that was intended to be expended. There is a sound objection, as the right hon. Gentleman knows, to Supplementary Estimates, and I should like to have the view of the First Lord of the Treasury upon that point.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): It will be within the recollection of the right hon. Gentleman, I think, that the Charity Commission was continued from year to year. The Charity Commission was only provided for under Statute up to the period for which it was authorized by Statute; and for many years it was necessary for successive Governments to present Supplementary Estimates for the Charity Commission.

Mr. T. M. HEALY asked whether the right hon. Gentleman had not, in 1881, proposed a Motion to abolish the Land Commission, and to issue an irresponsible Commission to take its place; and, whether it was intended by the Government now to carry that into effect?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am sure the hon. and learned Gentleman will see that that is a Question which ought not to be asked. I could not answer it seriously without due Notice.

CIVIL SERVICE WRITERS—COMPETITION FOR LOWER DIVISION CLERKSHIPS.

Mr. HOOPER (Cork, S.E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether he can state the number of Civil Service writers who, by reason of age, are able to take the benefit of the alleged concession with respect to age in competing for Lower Division clerkships; and, the number who have actually done so?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): I am informed that there are 350 copyists on the Register who, being above 20 years of age, are yet eligible to compete for Lower Division clerkships under the special Rule to which the hon. Member refers; and that at the last competition 31 did so compete.

HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE (CHANCERY DIVISION).

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked Mr. Attorney General, Whether there is any reason of a public nature why Motions in the Chancery Division should not be set down in a list as in the other Courts, and in the

Chancery Division itself, during the Long Vacation?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to say that the matter referred to in his Question has often been considered by both the Judges and the Bar of the Chancery Division. There is power in the Court at the present time to make a list of Motions should it be considered necessary in the interests of the despatch of business to do so; but the present system, which enables urgent Motions to be taken at any time, and Motions to be continued from day to day if required, is, in the opinion of the Judges and the Bar, most conducive to the despatch of business.

HARES PRESERVATION BILL.

COLONEL DAWNAY (York, N.R., Thirsk) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, considering the anxiety on the part of the agricultural population to prevent the total extermination of hares, the Government is prepared to give facilities to pass the Hares Preservation Bill at the earliest possible date?

MR. MUNRO-FERGUSON (Leith, &c.) asked the right hon. Gentleman, whether it was not a fact that the extermination of hares was not now entirely in the hands of the agricultural population; and, whether the manner in which this Bill had been blocked was significant of the opinion of the House in the direction of restricting that control?

MR. ANDERSON (Elgin and Nairn) asked, whether the Government were in possession of any information to lead to the belief that, under the existing laws, the total extinction of hares was contemplated?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, he did not intend to give a debating answer to the two hon. Gentlemen opposite. He could only answer the Question which his hon. and gallant Friend had put to him. He regretted that it had not been possible for his hon. and gallant Friend to obtain a second reading of his Bill. It was a subject that might very well be considered by that House. There were questions equally important that were raised by other hon. Gentlemen; and he was afraid it would not be in his power to give special facilities for one Bill, however important it might be in the judgment of those who supported it.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE—FRIDAY, MARCH 16.

MR. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, in view of the fact that the Government have already appropriated nearly the whole time of the Session, and also in view of the fact that the first Notice of Motion which stands on the Order Book for Friday, March 16, involves a direct censure upon a Member of the Government, as well as a grave Constitutional question, the Government will re-consider their determination to take a Morning Sitting on that day?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I was not aware of the fact mentioned by the right hon. and learned Member that the Government have appropriated nearly the whole time of the Session. I am sure the right hon. and learned Gentleman will see that it is the duty of the Government to arrange the Business of the House, so far as it is in their power to do so, having regard to the relative importance of the Business which is before the House; and I think he will not be surprised to hear that the Government are of opinion that the important question relating to the reduction of interest on the National Debt is greater than that of the question to which the right hon. and learned Gentleman refers. It is a matter of the highest importance to the country at large that the question involved in the second reading of the Bill for the reduction of the interest on the National Debt should be disposed of without delay. Therefore, it is impossible for me to comply with the suggestion of the right hon. and learned Gentleman; but I hope ample time will be found to dispose of his Motion.

MR. OSBORNE MORGAN said, he did not desire to contest the view of the right hon. Gentleman; but he asked for an undertaking that the Government would do as they did for the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) on Friday last—namely, to make a House at the Evening Sitting.

MR. W. H. SMITH said, the Government was bound to make a House at the Evening Sitting on Friday next.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked, whether the Government would promise that at Morning Sittings at this early period of the Session Bills should not be sneaked through?

MR. W. H. SMITH said, the Government was bound to make the best use of the time at their disposal. So long as sufficient Notice was given of the Business which the Government proposed to take, he thought the hon. Gentleman would see that he had no reason to complain if they availed themselves of every opportunity of forwarding Public Business.

MR. DILLON inquired, whether the Government proposed to use the Morning Sitting on Friday for the purpose of passing the Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland Bill?

MR. W. H. SMITH said, it was impossible to say at present.

MR. DILLON said, they ought to have Notice not later than to-morrow morning.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I think it is right that I should inform the House that I propose, on Monday next, to ask the leave of the House to introduce the Local Government Bill. It will be the first Order.

VISCOUNT EBRINGTON (Devon, Tavistock): Can the right hon. Gentleman inform the House when it is likely the Bill will be printed and circulated?

MR. RITCHIE: It is a very heavy Bill; and I think it probable that it will not be circulated for a week or 10 days after I have asked leave to introduce it.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman, after the answer he has given, whether he will undertake, as I am quite sure he will, to expedite the printing of the Bill to the best of his ability? because I think I may say it is a very unusual thing for a Government Bill not to be laid on the Table until 10 days after the preliminary statement in moving for leave. The right hon. Gentleman will observe that the country will not be in a position to make itself master of the provisions of so complicated a measure, however able the statement with regard to it may have been, until it is laid upon the Table of the House.

MR. RITCHIE: The right hon. Gentleman will understand that Her Majesty's Government have quite realized the great desirability of letting the House have the Bill as speedily as possible after leave to introduce has been given, and I will do all in my power to see that the utmost speed is used in printing it, and I hope that it may be printed within a week at any rate.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) asked, whether there was a single instance in which the circulation of a Bill of such importance, which had been so many months in preparation, had been so long delayed?

MR. RITCHIE: I cannot answer the Question off-hand; but I am told that it is not unusual for the circulation of a Bill of this magnitude to be delayed for an equal length of time.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): May we rely upon having the Bill circulated before the Easter Recess?

MR. RITCHIE: Yes; certainly.

WAYS AND MEANS—THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.): The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, the other day, that he would make his Budget Statement next Monday. Now we are told that the Local Government Bill is to be introduced on that day. When, then, will the Budget be taken?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): On this day fortnight.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

NATIONAL DEBT (CONVERSION) BILL.

FIRST READING.

Resolutions [March 9] *reported.*

SIR CHARLES LEWIS (Antrim, N.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated amount of the bonuses to be given to the holders of Consols and Reduced Threes; what is the estimated amount involved in the fee of 1*s.* 6*d.* in respect of agency; whether he is in a position, before the second reading, to state the number of each class of holders in each class of Stock of £1,000, £2,000, and £3,000 respectively; and, whether, having regard to the fact that this is the largest conversion that has ever taken place of Government Stock, and the enormous number of persons who are interested in it, the Government think that Friday is not rather too soon for the second reading?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): In regard to the estimated amount of bonus and agents' commission, it is, of course, utterly impossible to say to what extent the holders of Consols and Reduced Threes are likely to come in. There is one standard which, if he likes, the hon. Member can apply in order to get at the maximum, by assuming that the whole of the holders of Consols and Reduced Threes will be likely to come in. Of course, on the large amount of Stock held by Government Departments, no agents' commission will be paid. With regard to the number of holders, if the hon. Member will repeat the Question, I will try to get the information. It will, I believe, be absolutely indispensable, and according to precedent, that the dissents should be required within a reasonable time. Indeed, the whole operation might be jeopardized by too extended an interval being given. I did not allude to it in my speech on Friday last, because I preferred to rely entirely on our own precedents; but in the case of a very large conversion recently undertaken in France, only 10 days was given to the dissentients to express their dissent. I shall hope to be supported by the House in pushing the Bill through as rapidly as possible, and, of course, every possible opportunity will be given to ventilate the conditions in the country.

Resolutions *agreed to.*

Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Courtney, Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Jackson.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 164.]

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be read a second time upon Friday, at Two of the clock."

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) said, that this practically meant the settling of a Morning Sitting on which the Government might take any other Business besides the National Debt Bill. With a view to the scheme being considered on its merits last Friday, there was an absolute cessation of hostilities relating to the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland, and the Government took advantage of that state of affairs to press on other Business. He, therefore, wanted to know whether it was intended next Friday to break up the truce by putting down controversial matters after the National Debt Bill?

MR. SPEAKER said, the only question was, whether the second reading of the Bill should be set down for 2 o'clock on Friday, and it was not competent to enter into any other question.

MR. T. M. HEALY submitted that the fixing of the National Debt Bill would afford the Government the opportunity of putting other Business down.

MR. SPEAKER said, it did not follow that other Business would be set down.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, he would endeavour so to arrange the Business for the early Sitting on Friday as not to provoke opposition.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London) said, he thought the hon. and learned Member might make himself quite easy, for the Government were not likely to have an opportunity of proceeding with other Business.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

STATEMENT

OF

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY,

EXPLANATORY OF THE

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1888-9.

(Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.)

New Form of Estimates.

With the view of showing the exact cost of the Army and Navy respectively, a transfer of those Votes which in past years provided for Army requirements, and were borne on Navy Estimates, has been made to the Army Estimates, and a similar transfer has been made from Military to Naval Votes. The same principle has been worked out in detail in the Navy Votes themselves, which have been so recast as to show the full cost, both direct and indirect, of every separate establishment or branch of the Navy.

A Memorandum by the Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, in fuller explanation of the main principle adopted, is attached to the Estimates.

NAVAL FINANCE.

Expenditure of 1887-88, as compared with 1888-89.

The estimated expenditure for the year ending 31st March 1888 is £12,476,800, and for the year ending 31st March 1889 £13,082,800, showing an *apparent* increase of £606,000. Taking, however, into account the reciprocal transfer to Army Estimates of the Military Transport Vote and to Navy Estimates of the Vote for Naval Ordnance (a full explanation of which is given in the Estimates), the difference between the Estimates of the two years under comparison is a net Decrease to Naval Votes for the year 1888-89 of £905,581, sic. :—

Transferred from Army Votes for Naval Armaments	£1,717,561	
Less:—		
Transferred to Army Votes for Army Transport Service	205,980	
		£1,511,581
Abate:—		
Apparent Increase above stated		606,000
Net Decrease in Navy Estimates, 1888-89		£905.581

In describing last year the then position of Naval Finance, I pointed out that, owing to the exceptionally large outlay of the last three years, it would be possible for some years to come to associate a reduction of expenditure with an increase of naval efficiency and strength. By April 1888 the great bulk of the outlay necessary to bring the *matériel* and *personnel* of our Fleet up to the higher standard of efficiency will have been incurred, but the benefits of that increased expenditure are now only beginning to fully operate.

The financial policy of the present Board has been to wipe off, as rapidly as they could, the large liabilities for shipbuilding which had been incurred in 1885, and, until these had been reduced to a manageable shape, to postpone the commencement of an enlarged shipbuilding programme of their own. By adhering to this course they have now reduced to small dimensions their past liabilities, and completed with celerity the great bulk of the ships previously laid down, and known as Lord Northbrook's Special Programme.

Another cause has, however, largely contributed to the reduction of the expenditure for the forthcoming year. The reforms in Dockyard administration, begun in the year 1885, are now producing most satisfactory results. Supplementary Estimates for building have practically vanished; the cost of repairs has much diminished, and much of the work done in the past year has been well within the Estimate sanctioned. The savings in labour and material during 1887-88 have been great; and, as prices showed a tendency to rise, and as much of the material of the ships building, upon which these economies had been effected, was still unbought, we were able to utilize a certain portion of the savings in the advantageous purchase of stores. Curtailment of past liabilities, closer supervision of proposed expenditure, and purchases of stores in advance, have all contributed towards a diminution of the estimated outlay of 1888-89. A synopsis of the work proposed to be done, of the shipbuilding programme to be commenced, and of the establishments of men to be maintained, will show that the strength and efficiency of the Navy will be in all respects developed, and not contracted, during the next twelve months.

SPECIAL AUSTRALASIAN SQUADRON.

At the Colonial Conference, held in London during 1887, a special agreement was entered into between the Home Government and the representatives of the Australasian Colonies, under which a joint financial responsibility was established between the contracting parties for the creation and maintenance of a sea-going squadron of ships of war to protect the commerce of the Empire in Australasian waters. The peculiarity of the arrangement consisted, not merely in the establishment of a financial partnership between England and Australasia for this specific purpose, but in the apportionment of the liability so incurred. The Mother Country engaged to bear the whole cost of building, arming, and equipping the squadron; on the other hand, the Colonies undertook, when the vessels were commissioned, to meet the whole cost of their maintenance and manning up to a maximum of £91,000 annually during time of peace, and to pay in addition a sum of £35,000 annually for ten years, as a contribution towards the original cost of construction. The type, size, and special qualities of the vessels to be built will be hereafter described, but they will cost, when complete, between £800,000 and £900,000. Special provision will be made to meet this liability under Act of Parliament, the clauses of which will explain the financial arrangement proposed. It is estimated that £450,000 to £500,000 will be required to meet the cost of building these vessels during the financial year 1888-89, and a somewhat lesser sum during the following year 1889-90, to complete and render them ready for commission. The ships will be thus built and completed in two years. At the end of that time, the ships being in commission, an annual sum of £91,000 towards maintenance will be paid by the Colonies as an appropriation in aid of Navy Votes, and Naval Funds will for ten years subsequently receive this assistance; and in like manner the Imperial Exchequer will be credited for ten years with an annual payment of £35,000. By promptly performing our portion of the bargain, and paying for it in two years, the Navy will be augmented at the end of that period by seven efficient modern sea-going ships, and naval funds will then have a contribution for ten years to come in reduction of the sums annually voted by the Imperial Parliament. On the termination of the ten years the vessels will become the exclusive property of the British Government.

SHIPBUILDING PROGRAMME.

INCREASE TO FLEET, 1887-88.

It was anticipated in February 1887 that during the financial year 1887-88, 25 ships, having an aggregate displacement tonnage of upwards of 90,000 tons, would be completed and passed into the First Reserve as ready for service in 48 hours. Of these ships 10 were armoured, 2 protected, and 13 unprotected.

This Programme has been very nearly realized, and would have been actually carried out but for delays in the delivery of contract-built ships, the non-completion of guns by the promised dates, and the difficulties that have arisen in completing some of the contractors' steam trials.

In the 10 armoured ships are included 5 belted cruisers, 3 of which, for the reasons given above, will have to be completed in the earlier months of the financial year 1888-89. Two vessels of the class, the first delivered, are practically complete; and one of these, the "Orlando," is to be the new flag-ship on the Australian Station.

The "Rodney," "Benbow," and "Hero" are complete, except for gun-trials and certain modifications of torpedo net defence.

The "Warspite" will be completed in all respects, her gun-trials having taken place.

The "Howe" is practically complete, so far as Dockyard work is concerned, but waiting for her barbette guns, the delivery of which has been delayed, but which are now promised at an early date.

Six armoured ships have, therefore, been completed; one completed except receiving her guns on board; and three have had their completion postponed for a few months.

All the protected and unprotected vessels will be completed, as proposed, in 1887-88: the steam trials of two or three may have to be finished in April. These 15 vessels* include 2 protected 18-knot cruisers ("Mersey" class), 7 torpedo cruisers ("Archer" class and "Fearless") of 17 knots, 3 torpedo gunboats ("Rattlesnake" class) of 19 knots, 1 composite sloop, and 2 gunboats.

All these vessels will be practically complete except two of the torpedo cruisers, whose steam trials have been delayed owing to the failure of the contractors for the engines to obtain in the earlier trials the necessary power.

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* The completion of the "Archer" had to be deferred to 1887-88, on account of steam trials, so that 16 vessels will be practically added in that financial year.

ADVANCEMENT OF SHIPS INCOMPLETE IN 1887-88.

In addition to the foregoing list of ships completed during 1887-88, reference must be made to the large amount of work done in advancing other new ships, as yet incomplete.

Of the armoured ships the "Camperdown," "Anson," and "Immortalité," are rapidly approaching completion, and the further expenditure upon them will be comparatively small. The protected cruiser "Forth," the last of the "Mersey" class, has been pressed forward, and the "Aurora," the last of the belted cruisers, has had large sums spent upon her.

The progress of the "Trafalgar" and "Nile" has been exceptionally rapid, the armour plating of the hull of the former being now complete. It is believed that the "Trafalgar" will be completed in the year 1889-90.

ADVANCEMENT OF SHIPS LAID DOWN IN 1887-88.

Good progress has also been made on the new vessels laid down in 1887-88 in the Dockyards. The two 20-knot protected cruisers building at Chatham have been pushed forward nearly to the stage of launching; the similar, but sheathed, cruiser at Portsmouth has been advanced considerably beyond what was contemplated in the Estimates for 1887-88. The two composite sloops ("Nymphe" and "Daphne") are almost ready for launching, and the 6 gunboats of the "Pheasant" class have been advanced as was intended.

It was found to be advantageous for the economical employment and distribution of workmen that four ships, not contained in the Estimates of 1887-88, and additional to the authorized programme, should be laid down and commenced during that financial year. These vessels were required for special service and reliefs, and consisted of three gunboats (of the "Rattler" class modified) and a paddle steamer for surveying service. The three gunboats are building at Pembroke.

CONTRACT WORK IN 1887-88.

The work on ships building by contract in 1887-88 has very nearly kept pace with the programme; of the five belted cruisers, the "Orlando" and "Undaunted" were delivered within the contract time: the remaining vessels were not delivered until the contract dates had been exceeded.

The "Victoria," formerly "Renown," but re-named in honour of Her Majesty's Jubilee, was launched early in April last year, and it is probable she will be delivered in April next, or three years from the date of the contract, and six months within the guaranteed period.

The sister vessel "Sanspareil" was launched in May, 1887, and it is anticipated that her delivery will also take place some months within the period allowed by the contract.

The completion of these two powerful iron-clads will bring to an end the Special Programme of 1885, originated by Lord Northbrook, so that it may be anticipated that the expenditure involved in carrying out that Programme will be almost concluded during the year 1888-89. The actual date of completion of these two ships for service depends upon the dates of delivery of the 110-ton turret guns, and this may lead to some expenditure upon them in 1889-90.

During 1887-88 the only new vessels ordered by contract were the sheathed protected cruisers "Magicienne" and "Marathon," which are being built by the Fairfield Company, Glasgow; the engines being supplied by Messrs. Hawthorn, Leslie, & Co. These vessels are being advanced very rapidly, and the contract provides for their delivery at the end of this year (1888).

The work done by private firms in connection with the machinery of H.M. Ships during 1887-88 has been of remarkable magnitude and importance. Continual advances in the speed of war ships involve the construction of machinery of ever increasing power, and the introduction of successive improvements. In this continuous effort the professional officers of the Admiralty have had the advantage of the co-operation and assistance of the most eminent private firms of marine engineers who contract for the machinery. Some of the trials made during the year 1887-88 have been of exceptional interest; as for example those of the "Anson," the "Orlando," "Galatea," and "Rattlesnake." The decision to adopt triple expansion engines has been amply justified by the results so far attained. In not a few cases the engine power and speeds estimated in the stage of design have been considerably exceeded on trial.

TORPEDO BOATS.

During the year 1887-88 all the first class torpedo boats (20 in number, from 125 to 150 feet in length) have been completed, and a considerable amount of experience has been obtained with boats of the various types on actual service.

At the close of 1887-88 we shall possess 80 first class torpedo boats and 63 second class boats, of which latter 12 are built of wood and 51 of steel.

It is contemplated to order 6 first class torpedo boats, and 10 second class boats in 1888-89.

The decision of the Board contained in my statement of last year, by which they determined to discontinue the building of torpedo boats for *sea-going purposes* and to substitute vessels of a much larger displacement, was amply justified by the experiments of the past year. A squadron of 24 first class boats was commissioned for purposes of exercise and tactics in the Channel. The cruise was of great value in testing the detailed fittings and equipment of the boats, comparing the different types, and in giving experience to officers and crews in the management of torpedo boats and their machinery; and the benefits arising therefrom were fully manifested when 33 torpedo boats were subsequently commissioned for service during the Naval Manœuvres of August 1887. These two cruises, however, confirmed the previous opinion of the Board, that this class of boat, although doubtless of great value for the protection of ports and their vicinity, are not well suited to accompany fleets at sea, and in bad weather would be a source of anxiety. The result of these experiments has been confirmed by the manœuvres elsewhere of torpedo boats of foreign nations.

TORPEDO GUNBOATS.

On the other hand, the Torpedo Gunboat, the "Rattlesnake," has been an undoubted success, for it has been actively employed during last year, taking part in the experimental cruise of the Torpedo Flotilla, and also in the Naval Manœuvres of August, 1887. On the whole her performances have been most satisfactory; and her power of maintaining a high rate of speed and thorough habitability under circumstances of wind and sea, which compel even the largest torpedo boats to slow down, has been conclusively established.

In view of the ascertained qualities of the "Rattlesnake," and of what is being done by other Navies in the construction of similar vessels, a design has been approved for a larger and swifter vessel than the "Rattlesnake." The "Sharpshooter," provided for the Estimates of 1887-8, has been commenced at Devonport, and arrangements have been made for building six other vessels of the type at Devonport and Chatham in 1888. These vessels have a displacement of 735 tons, as against the 590 tons of the "Rattlesnake," and this additional tonnage is associated with a speed of 21 knots, as against 19 knots of the smaller vessel. The armament is proportionately stronger. The completion of the vessels of this type, which are both building and about to be laid down, will give a total of 11 Torpedo Gunboats to the Navy.

STEAMING TRIALS OF SHIPS IN COMMISSION.

In order to test thoroughly the steaming capabilities of new ships, orders were given last year to make trials extending continuously over four days, the machinery being worked by the ordinary complements of the ships. Trials such as these made on foreign stations, with the bottoms of the ships in various conditions and under different circumstances of wind and weather, are of value chiefly as indications of the power that can be developed continuously, and are not evidences of the speeds which the vessels can attain under the most favourable conditions. It is satisfactory to report that no less than 70 to 80 per cent of the contract horse-power developed on the measured mile or 6 hours' contractors' trials, has been developed under the severer conditions of 96 hours' continuous steaming.

METHOD OF PREPARING SHIPBUILDING PROGRAMME, 1888-89.

The Programme of New Construction, to be undertaken in the coming financial year, has been most thoroughly considered and discussed by the Board. In framing it, full consideration has been bestowed upon the requirements of the Fleet, in relation to reliefs, the various special services required of H.M. ships on foreign stations, and the "waste" of the Navy resulting from ships becoming obsolete through age or the progress of invention. A careful examination was also made into the composition of the squadrons abroad, and a standard of strength was fixed both for reserves at home as well as for stations abroad, up to which the Fleet should always be maintained. The condition and character of the ships already in progress, as well as their state of advancement, have also been kept in view. Moreover, a careful examination has also been made of the Shipbuilding Policy now being pursued by Foreign Navies, the progress made on ships yet incomplete belonging to these Navies and the liabilities yet remaining to be discharged.

In order that the necessary time might be given to the consideration of these complex conditions, the building programme was taken in hand early in the autumn of last year. As the Estimates of expenditure for the forthcoming year are always prepared in November, it was believed that if the number and size of the ships to be built could be definitely settled before the Votes for the material and labour to be required in the Dockyard were considered, considerable economy would result from the store and labour estimate being based on confirmed data, and not upon assumption and contingency. By placing before the Dockyard officials and various purchasing departments of the Admiralty the exact amount of work and of stores they were expected to provide, the Estimates have been prepared with much greater accuracy and closeness than was possible when the conditions were reversed.

NEW SHIPS TO BE BUILT.

After completing the 7 armoured ships before alluded to, there will remain in hand the following armoured vessels when the next financial year closes:—

"Victoria,"
"Sanspareil,"
"Aurora,"
"Nile,"
"Trafalgar,"

and of these the first three will be approaching completion, while considerable expenditure will still have to be incurred on the "Nile" and "Trafalgar."

The Board, therefore, decided not to lay down during 1888-9 any new ironclads. They propose, however, to re-engine the "Superb" and "Thunderer," and re-arm the latter. Provision for these purposes has been made in this year's Estimates.

Excluding for the moment the special squadron for Australasian service, the following are the new vessels to be built in 1888-9:—

9—Protected Ships:—	
First Class Cruisers	2
Torpedo Depôt Ship and Torpedo Boat Carrier	1
Third Class Cruisers	
Steel Bottomed	2
Sheathed and Coppered	4
14—Unprotected Ships:—	
Sloops ("Buzzard" type)	2
Gunboats * ("Rattler" type, improved)	6
Torpedo Gunboats ("Sharpshooter" type)	6
1 Sailing Brig (training boys)	1
	24

All these vessels, with the exception of one first-class and one third-class cruiser, and two composite gunboats, will be built in the Dockyards.

The special squadron for service in Australasian waters is to consist of

5	Protected Cruisers (new design).
2	Torpedo Gunboats ("Sharpshooter" type).
7	

It is proposed to construct these 7 vessels by contract.

The total number of vessels to be laid down is 31, comprising an aggregate displacement of 60,000 tons.

DESCRIPTION OF NEW DESIGNS.

After fully considering all the vessels of the cruiser classes in existence, building, or proposed for Foreign Navies, and those completed or in progress for the Royal Navy, it has been decided to construct two vessels ("Blake" and "Blenheim") which shall surpass in speed, coal endurance, protection, and armament, anything hitherto attempted. Their dimensions are

Length	375 feet.
Breadth	65 ,,
Displacement (about)	9,000 tons.
Speed (with full speed supply) on measured mile	22 knots.
At sea (continuous steaming)	20 ,,
Radius of action—	
Speed of 10 knots, about	15,000 ,,
Speed of 20 knots, about	3,000 ,,

The armament will be definitely determined when the trials of the larger natures of quick-firing guns, now in progress, have been completed. Provisionally it includes

2 9·2-in. (22-ton) bow and stern chasers,
10 6-in. (5-ton) quick-firers, broadside,
18 3-prs. quick-firers,
4 Torpedo tubes.

The supply of ammunition to the quick-firing guns will be of very exceptional amount; and the weight assigned to the armament considerably in excess of that in any other cruiser.

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* This is independent of the 3 gunboats of this type ordered to be laid down at Pembroke in September, 1887, and not included in the original programme of that year.

The protective steel deck will extend throughout the length, and over the machinery, boilers, &c.; will have a maximum thickness of 6 inches, and a minimum of 3 inches.

This maximum thickness of 6 inches will afford the same protection from the direct blows of projectiles, as would a vertical plate of 12 inches in thickness.

The coal-endurance, based upon the supply that is to be carried at the maximum speeds, is very nearly double that provided for in other cruisers; and compares even more favourably with the endurance of nearly all foreign cruisers; for the service intended this is a matter of primary importance.

The propelling engines will be of the vertical triple expansion type, and many new features tending to the efficiency of the vessels when employed at speeds varying over the great range of 10 knots to 22 knots per hour will be introduced into the arrangements of engines, boilers, and coal stowage.

The condition of steaming continuously for long periods and over great distances at the very high speed of 20 knots per hour has been made a ruling condition in the design; and with forced draught spurts of several hours' duration will be possible up to 22 knots.

In the maintenance of these high speeds at sea, the great length (for a war-ship), and considerable size of the vessels, will obviously be of marked advantage.

As compared with previous cruisers these vessels are of large displacement, but taking into account their qualities above mentioned—speed, armament, coal endurance, and strong protection—they are not large vessels; and as compared with the mercantile steamers having ocean speed of 16 to 20 knots per hour, built or building, the new cruisers are of small size.

As protectors of commerce against regular or improvised cruisers these vessels will be most useful; and for many other services they will prove most valuable additions to the Fleet.

It is proposed to push on their construction as rapidly as is possible.

TORPEDO DEPÔT SHIP AND TORPEDO BOAT CARRIER "VULCAN."

The value of the "Hecla" torpedo depôt ship as an adjunct to our principal squadrons has been most thoroughly demonstrated during the last ten years. The "Hecla," as is well known, was purchased from the Mercantile Marine and adapted as a torpedo depôt and store ship; she was also equipped for carrying a number of second-class torpedo boats. A careful study of the work done by the "Hecla," and the conditions now regarded as essential in a vessel capable of doing similar work, preceded the preparation of the design of the vessel about to be laid down at Portsmouth. This design is altogether novel in character, and has been worked out in the utmost detail during the last two years.

The "Vulcan" may be briefly described as a swift protected cruiser, lightly armed, with a large coal endurance; fitted with special appliances for lifting and carrying a considerable number of the largest type of second-class torpedo boats; while, in addition, she will be equipped with laboratory, workshop, a powerful torpedo armament, a large supply of torpedoes, stores, submarine mines, and electrical appliances of all kinds. She will be capable of protecting herself against all except the largest class of cruisers; her speed will exceed that of most cruisers and all armoured vessels. She will be a base of operations for a torpedo boat flotilla or the torpedo boats of a Fleet; have the means of repairing torpedoes, torpedo boats, and their machinery; be a practice ship for all kinds of torpedo work—submerged and above water—and will carry all the gear required for submarine mining operations on a large scale.

The principal dimensions are :—

Length..	350 feet.
Breadth	58 ,,
Displacement (about)	6,600 tons.
Speed (with full coal supply)—	
On measured mile	20 knots.
At sea (continuous steaming)	18 ,,
Radius of action—	
Speed of 10 knots (about)	12,000 knots.
Speed of 18 knots ,,	3,000 ,,

Armament :—

8 36-prs. (quick-firers).
12 3-prs. ,, ,,
4 to 6 Torpedo-tubes.

The protective steel deck will extend throughout the length, and over machinery, boilers, &c., will have a maximum thickness of 5 inches, and a minimum of 2½ inches.

Hydraulic power is to be applied throughout the vessel on a large scale, for lifting the boats and doing all kinds of work.

THIRD CLASS CRUISERS.

Two types of these cruisers have been decided upon, identical in armament, rig, and protection, but differing in structure, propelling machinery, and boilers, speed and coal endurance.

For distant service on stations where docking accommodation does not exist, or may not be available in time of war, it has been decided to build four vessels ("Blanche" class), having their steel hulls sheathed with wood, and coppered. These vessels will have only light fore-and-aft steadying sails.

Their dimensions are—

Length	220 feet.
Breadth	35 ,,
Displacement (about)	1,600 tons.
Speed (with full coal supply)—	
On measured mile	16½ knots.
At sea (continuous steaming)	15 ,,
Radius of action at 10 knots (about)	3,500 ,,

Armament :—

6 36-prs. (quick-firers).
4 3-prs. ,,
2 Torpedo tubes.

The protective steel deck will extend throughout the length, and have (over vitals) a maximum thickness of 2 inches, and a minimum of 1 inch.

The engines will be of the vertical triple expansion type, and the boilers of the ordinary return tube marine type. Twin screws will be adopted as in all other modern cruisers.

For service from a base, such as in the Channel Squadron, or the Mediterranean, it has been decided to construct two steel-bottomed third-class cruisers ("Bellona" class), which (as explained above) resemble the "Blanche" class in armament and protection, but have higher speed. In these vessels the modified locomotive type of boiler, which has achieved success in the torpedo gunboats, will be fitted. A maximum speed of 19½ knots will thus be secured; the vessels will be about 50 feet longer than the "Blanche" class, and of 200 tons greater displacement. Their coal endurance at 10 knots will be about 2,600 knots.

TORPEDO GUNBOATS ("SHARPSHOOTER" TYPE).

This is also a new design, the leading features of which have been already described. Its preparation completes a series of new designs for vessels of altogether exceptional speed and armament, which have engaged the close attention of the Director of Naval Construction and his Department for more than a year, and have involved a very large amount of labour and discussion.

Taking these new types in association with previous cruiser designs, it appears that there has been effected a virtual reconstruction of the cruiser classes, as will appear from the following summary:—

	Tons.	Maximum Speed.
		Knots.
Protected.—"Blake" class	9,000	22
" "Vulcan" class (torpedo depôt ship)	6,600	20
Armour Belted.—"Orlando" class	5,600	8·15
Protected,—"Mersey" class	4,000	18
" "Medea" class	2,080 to 3,000	20 to 19¾
" For Australasian service	2,500	19
" "Bellona" class	1,800	19½
" "Blanche" class	1,600	16½
Unprotected.—"Archer" class	1,770	17
" "Rattlesnake" class	550	18½ to 19
" "Sharpshooter"	730	21

Of those new types all the designs have been prepared within the last two years, except those for "Orlando," "Mersey," "Archer," and "Rattlesnake" classes. The completion and trials of these vessels will be pressed forward with all possible despatch.

SLOOPS, "BEAGLE" AND "BASILISK."

These vessels are to be practically reproductions of the "Buzzard," and are specially intended for service on distant foreign stations. They are twin-screw unprotected sloops of about 1,150 tons displacement, and 14½ knots measured mile speed, with 160 tons of coal on board. Including the "Swallow," which has been in commission for some time, there are four vessels of the class built and building. The two new vessels are to be built with steel hulls, wood sheathed, and coppered; their predecessors are composite-built. They will have a fair amount of sail, but this is auxiliary only to their steam power.

GUNBOATS ("MAGPIE" CLASS).

The policy of the Board in regard to the smaller vessels of the Navy was last year fully explained, but it may be as well to briefly recapitulate.

The magnitude and variety of our trade and commerce, and the overwhelming proportions of our sea-going tonnage as compared to that of any other country, impose upon the Navy of this country active duties abroad of a very exceptional character. The functions thus discharged by our Fleet are a national necessity, and the benefits derived from the adequate performance of this work are ubiquitous and shared in by foreign nations. Yet the dangers which threaten our commerce in war time so differ from those against which they are guarded during peace, that it is no easy matter to make the whole of our Navy equally available and efficient for the discharge of both duties. Vessels of light draught and small displacement can, to a certain extent, be utilized for both purposes, provided they are armed with the most effective of modern guns and have a certain speed. Their number must, however, be curtailed, otherwise too large a proportion of our naval expenditure will be absorbed in vessels whose employment and utility during war must be confined to a very limited sphere of action.

The Board, finding it necessary to replace the obsolete gunboats and ships now serving abroad, determined to build a limited number of gunboats of an exceptionally powerfully type in order that they might be able to fulfil the conditions I have described.

Nine additional gunboats have therefore been ordered. They are practically identical with the vessels of the "Pheasant" class; but in order to provide for the 4 per cent. "margin for contingencies" ordered by the Board, they have been made 1 foot broader and about 50 tons greater displacement than the "Pheasant."

The Board's decision on this matter was arrived at in full view of the circumstances attending the sad loss of the "Wasp," so far as those circumstances can ever be known. Having carefully reconsidered all the particulars of her design in comparison with the corresponding particulars for preceding classes of gunboats, whose performances during a period of 30 years have been found most satisfactory, the Board reached the conclusion that the "Wasp" was in all features affecting seaworthiness and safety far superior to the gunboats which preceded her; and that there was no reason for modifying the design of the "Pheasant" and "Magpie" classes.

The opinion of the naval members of the Board, after a full and exhaustive inquiry into the subject, is recorded in the Appendix.

These gunboats will be substituted for the various types and classes of gun vessels and gunboats now in commission, none of which it is proposed to reproduce.

AUSTRALASIAN SQUADRON.

Of the seven vessels to be built for this special service, five are to be protected cruisers and two torpedo gunboats.

It has been decided that the latter shall be built from the "Sharpshooter" design.

The protected cruisers will in their principal dimensions closely approximate to the "Medea" class of the Royal Navy, described on page 11 of last year's Statement. They will be of about 2,500 tons displacement, have a maximum speed of 19 knots, and be identical in protection with the "Medea" class.

Their armament will include—

8 36-prs. quick-firers.
8 3-prs. ,, ,,
4 Torpedo tubes.

In the discussions which took place at the time of the Colonial Conference these vessels were described as "Improved Archers." The substantial character of the improvement will be seen from the statement that the new vessels will possess the following advantages over the "Archers":—

2 knots higher speed.
A strong protective deck.
A more modern armament; about 10 per cent. heavier in its total weight.
A radius of action about 30 per cent. greater.

It is anticipated that all these vessels will be ready for service within two years from the date of order.

ESTIMATED TONNAGE TO BE COMPLETED.

It is estimated that the following is the amount of displacement tonnage which for the three years ending April 1890 will be passed into the fleet ready for commission:—

1887-88.	1888-89.	1889-90.
*75,000	77,000	†75,000

Of this tonnage the following amount belongs to Lord Northbrook's Special Programme:—

1887-88.	1888-89.	1889-90.
21,800	16,800	21,500

All vessels designed during the present year have a margin unappropriated for contingencies of 4 per cent. upon their displacement. The Board have

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* The reason for the difference between the amount estimated last year and that now estimated will be found on page 5.

† Inclusive of Australasian Squadron.

adopted this regulation to provide for unforeseen contingencies or weights added during construction, and to keep the vessel to the designed draught, and thus prevent the deeper immersion which the additional weights, for which no allowance has been made, must otherwise cause.

DOCKYARD ADMINISTRATION.

The various alterations and improvements made during the past year for the purpose of obtaining a firmer and more reliable hold over Dockyard Expenditure have begun to realize satisfactory results. The rapidity of construction shown in the advance of the iron-clad "Trafalgar" has rivalled, if not beaten, the best record in private shipbuilding yards, and other ships building are being pushed on with almost equal celerity. A great reduction has also been effected in the cost of building and repairs, and the incidental expenditure—that is, the annual outlay which hitherto has not been charged direct to any special service, has not only been curtailed, but under new forms of account, by which every item is brought to book, will continue to decrease.

The reform of any great Government establishment, where the traditions and usages of many generations have established unwritten regulations not always in accord with the rules of the controlling authorities, must necessarily be a work of gradual development and attended with constant hostile criticism. Discharge of redundant establishments and abolition of useless offices and the introduction of stricter supervision and check over expenditure and work must annoy the personal interests so touched. But the general result of the operations during the past two and a-half years has been so remarkable and so encouraging that, even at the risk of going into tedious details, I feel it my duty to bring them out into clear relief. It is due to the Controller of the Navy and the officers who have unflinchingly adhered to the policy of reform which they themselves inaugurated, that the magnitude of the service they have rendered should be known.

A large programme of work and advancement was last year estimated for in work and money. The programme has in work almost been realized, but in every case where the progress is below the estimate the delay has been entirely due either to the failure of private shipbuilders to keep to the dates promised for delivery of ships, to their inability to pass the specified steam trials, or to the non-delivery of promised guns.

If the estimate of work has been maintained, except where outside causes interfered, the estimate of cost has been largely diminished.

SAVINGS UPON ORIGINAL ESTIMATES.

The following tabular statement shows some of the cases of savings upon the original estimates for ships building; but this is not exhaustive by any means:—

Name of Ship.	Estimate submitted by Dockyard.	Estimate as reduced.	Actual cost of work, or Estimate to latest date.	Remarks.
	£	£	£	
Trafalgar	686,400	646,400*	—	Exclusive of first fitting stores, gun mountings, and torpedo tubes.
Nile	686,400	646,400*	—	
Benbow	37,300	34,600	31,100	
Howe	485,500	—	472,000	
Hero	315,000	—	300,000	
Immortalité	203,000	—	187,000	
Severn	140,400	—	133,400	
Tartar	16,370	—	15,870	Exclusive of first fitting stores.
No. 81 Torpedo Boat ..	7,730	6,000	5,750	Includes first fitting stores but not gun mountings.
Melpomene	83,800	80,980	—	
Medea & Medusa (each)	89,375	76,633	—	
Nymphe	40,851	38,511	—	

* £40,000 reduction for labour alone.

The following tabular statement, which also is not exhaustive, shows some of the savings that have been effected upon ships repaired and re-fitted:—

Name of Ship.	Estimate submitted by Dockyard.	Estimate as reduced.	Actual cost of work, or Estimate to latest date.	Remarks.
	£	£	£	
Northumberland ..	45,300	24,300	22,000	
Algerine	9,230	9,230	8,060	The Dockyard Estimates were cut down before being submitted, by arrangement with Director of Dockyards.
Garnet	34,950	32,800	25,500	
Griffon	15,200	15,200	14,150	
Flamingo	15,450	15,450	14,400	
Curacoa	40,100	33,300	31,000	These amounts are all exclusive of gun mountings and torpedo tubes.
Cleopatra	31,550	29,900	29,000	
Champion	32,500	30,000	29,000	
Téméraire	45,000	4,250	4,300	This vessel came home for a thorough refit and for new boilers, but it was found upon examination she could easily be made good for another commission, and this was done at the small outlay shown; thus postponing the large refit for the term of another commission.

Figures such as the above do not by any means represent the full effect exercised by the Controller's Department upon expenditure, because much of the effect shows itself, or is now showing itself, in the lowering of first estimates as compared with many that were formerly submitted by the Dockyards.

It is noteworthy that hardly any recent estimate, which, after careful examination by the Controller's Officers, was reduced, has subsequently been exceeded by the Yards; but that, as a rule, there have been substantial savings even upon the reduced amounts. This proves that the Dockyard Officials are now heartily co-operating with the central authorities, and are watching carefully the working out of estimate and the cutting down of unnecessary expenditure.

NEW FORM OF ESTIMATE FOR SHIPS TO BE BUILT.

New forms of estimates for ships to be built, and of cost accounts arranged so as to admit of detailed comparison with the various items of the original estimates, have been in full operation during the present year. Too much importance cannot be attached to these detailed forms of estimates and to the cost accounts framed in agreement with them. Under these forms, when a ship is completed, it will be possible to compare the details of expenditure with the estimate, and to ascertain what department and what class of work is responsible for any excess that may occur.

It will also be possible to closely compare the costs in detail of ships built in different dockyards, and that of dockyard-built ships with those obtained by contract.

INDEPENDENT RECORDERS OF WORK.

The establishment of independent recorders of work, who go round at intervals daily and note down in the diaries the employment of the men, has been introduced. This change, as well as the new form of accounts, are closely assimilated to the methods and practice of the best managed private yards.

Owing to want of time and the heavy pressure of work consequent upon these changes in the Home Yards, the Dockyards abroad have not yet been subjected to a similar supervision. A certain economy has however been effected, and during the coming year this will be further developed.

ECONOMY IN EMPLOYMENT OF SHIP'S ARTIFICERS TO REMEDY DEFECTS.

The orders issued early last year respecting the employment of Artificers in repairing defects, and preventing defects growing up in Ships in Commission, have already borne good fruit. The result is shown in smaller defect lists at Malta and other Foreign Stations, and also in reduced expenditure at the Home Yards upon casual work to this class of ships. The expenditure upon casual work is being gradually reduced all round, and I am confident that as a result of the orders above referred to, and of the close examination now made of the details of such work, considerably greater reductions will be made in the future. There will be a saving upon labour employed on casual work this year, after including nearly £10,000 (not provided for) for labour expended upon the Jubilee Review requirements.

INCIDENTAL EXPENDITURE.

The manner in which incidental expenditure has been scrutinized has led to a considerable saving being effected during 1887-88 ; and much larger additional reductions are being arranged for in 1888-89.

EMPLOYMENT OF DOCKYARD HANDS UPON CASUAL WORK.

The cost of shipbuilding has been increased in the past, and the progress of the work upon new construction much interfered with, by the practice that had grown up of taking hands off new ships or large repairs for casual work as it arose, or for dealing with any temporary emergency. The number of men employed in advancing new construction and large repairs has thus been subjected to all kinds of fluctuations. The system obviously interferes with progress, with methodical arrangement of work, and with cost.

During 1887-88 large reductions (about 2,000 in all), through discharges, deaths, superannuations, &c.) have been made in the Dockyards, and these reductions have caused such hardship in the Dockyard Towns that I did not think it advisable to discharge, in addition, the full numbers that might have been spared in every case, during temporary slackness of casual work. Temporary relief has been afforded, whenever possible, by employing redundant men upon work extra to the Programme, when such work was proved to be necessary. The policy pursued during 1887-88 has been to discharge redundant hands as gradually as possible, and bring down the number upon the books to what is required as an average for the work of the year.

Now that the numbers have been reduced to a fair average for 1888-89, it has been decided to work, in future, upon the principle of keeping a proper number of hands upon new ships without interruption, and not to take them off whenever casual work or cases of emergency arise.

Instructions have just been sent to the Superintendents to avoid such changes of employment of men as much as possible, in future, and to enter and discharge men as required for casual work when such men are not available in the Dockyard without disturbing the building programme. This class of entry is to be recognized as casual and temporary only, and this will be made clear to the men when entered.

PROGRESS MADE TRUE TEST OF SHIPBUILDING PROGRAMME.

Although a large reduction of men was necessary during 1887-88, the amount of work done was not practically affected by the reduction.

Hitherto it has been the practice to estimate the amount of shipbuilding proposed by the amount of money devoted to that purpose, and to assume that as the amount in one of the two years under comparison was lessened so was shipbuilding curtailed. Such a comparison must necessarily be fallacious when it relates to two consecutive years, in one of which estimates were prepared under an old system, and in the other under new and more economical method. Although the aggregate amount of money proposed to be voted for labour in the Dockyards in 1888-89 is less than that voted for 1887-88, yet, by a more careful distribution of labour, the amount actually appropriated to new construction, and consequently the output of work, will be greater.

From the statement relating to depreciation of the Fleet, appended to the Estimates, it will be seen that the sum of £2,070,000* is required to be expended to maintain the Fleet in its present efficiency. The sum devoted to New Construction this year is, exclusive of Australasian Squadron, £2,971,000.

CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THE PAST.

The diagnosis which our inquiries have enabled us to make of the past working of the Dockyard system suggests the following remedies:—

That when a ship is laid down it is essential, if cheap and rapid construction be required, that the largest amount of labour that can be economically employed should be put upon the ship and kept there without undue interference till complete.

That no course can be more injudicious as regards the actual cost of building ships, or more likely to put their efficiency out of date when built, than to commence a large shipbuilding programme with insufficient funds.

That to properly employ the various trades and classes of labour, it is necessary to lay down large ships at intervals, and not simultaneously in the same yards.

That the more rigid the system of account, and the more items that are brought in as direct charges, the greater is the tendency of incidental expenditure to contract.

That if real financial control is to be exercised over shipbuilding and dockyard expenditure, it is essential that the control should be in the hands of men who understand the nature of work they supervise and of the expenditure they check. No official, whatever may be his aptitude, who is a purely accounting officer, can with advantage undertake, or have imposed on him, such duties.

By adherence to these simple rules in the future, to the efficiency of which the savings of 1887-88 testify, we hope to ultimately enable the Dockyards to compete successfully, both in cost and rapidity of construction, with the private yards of the country.

The amount of labour imposed upon the department of the Controller of the Navy during the last eighteen months has been exceedingly heavy. The completion of the large ironclads, with their novel and multitudinous fittings and mountings, the number of new designs to be worked out, and the alterations both in account and administrative detail necessitated by the change in the Dockyards, tested the capacity of the department in everything relating to both the design and building of ships, and the management of great establishments. The departmental officers have proved themselves fully equal to the onerous task imposed on them, and I am glad to be able to point out that the State commands the services of officials who are able to meet all the modern requirements of the day, and capable of giving to the country a good return for the expenditure entrusted to them.

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* This sum now includes gun mountings and incidental expenditure, but excludes, as explained last year, expenditure upon "Nile" and "Trafalgar."

NAVAL ORDNANCE.

The recent re-organization of the War Office Department, under which a separation was made between the civil departments which manufacture, and the combatant branches which use the articles so manufactured, facilitated the transfer to the Navy estimates of the charge hitherto borne on Army votes for Naval Ordnance. Though the Board of Admiralty have assented to the change, they have done so with some hesitation. The information supplied to them, both as to existing stock and outstanding liabilities, is imperfect, from the difficulty the War Office has experienced in apportioning from stocks held in common for both services, and contained in store-houses scattered over the world, the exact amount to be credited to the Navy. Until the Admiralty are in complete possession of such information, though ready to account for and explain the vote so transferred, they cannot make themselves responsible for its adequacy. The sum proposed to be taken is, judging from past experience, as much as can be earned by the existing gun factories in the country, and should be more than sufficient to meet the normal wants of the year. Whatever deficiency of stores may exist at the commencement of the financial year should therefore be diminished at its close, and the maintenance of the ordnance vote at its present high figures for a few years to come should bring up to the requisite standard the reserves of ammunition and stores. In the course of the year complete information on this point will be obtained, and the Board of Admiralty will regulate their action accordingly.

During the year ending December 31st, 1887, 238 new Breech-Loading Guns have been issued to the Navy, including two 16¼-inch guns of 111 tons, and four 13½-inch guns of 69 tons.

In addition to these 238 guns, 123 new guns, including one 16¼-inch and eleven 13½-inch guns, may be completed by the end of March 1888. This will still leave 254 guns under order, exclusive of fresh guns, to be obtained in 1888-89.

Considerable delay has occurred in the delivery of guns at the dates previously promised. Several of the heavier ironclads are now awaiting their armament, and the programme of Dockyard work has been deranged, and the cost of completing ships has been increased by these delays. So few breech-loading guns of large calibre have hitherto been made in this country, that all concerned in their manufacture, whether they be private contractors or Woolwich factory, seem to have antedated the finish of their work and miscalculated the time necessary for its completion. As experience is gained it is to be hoped that punctuality of delivery will be associated with it, and that one of the main impediments now existing to the passing of ships rapidly into the First Reserve, as ready for service, will be removed.

The "Edinburgh" and "Colossus," recently commissioned, have tested and tried the working of the new hydraulic machinery upon which are mounted the Breech-Loading Guns of large calibre, and the results have been satisfactory. A report of target practice from the "Colossus" has been received, in which it is stated that four successive rounds from one of the 43-ton guns were fired in six minutes (the ship steaming at high speed and at a distance of 1,500 yards from the target), and three hits were made.

The mountings for the still heavier guns of 67 and 110 tons necessarily involve many important and novel features. The tests with these mountings have, up to the present, been quite satisfactory, and it is hoped that the ships armed with these guns will soon carry out full experiments of these armaments in which more experience will be gained.

During the year important experiments have been undertaken with the view of extending the system of metallic cartridge in use for the quick-firing 6-pounder and smaller guns, to guns up to and including 6 inches in calibre.

These trials demonstrated the practicability of producing efficient metallic cartridges of a size hitherto unattempted, and exhibited the many advantages which would accrue from working ammunition in this form.

In considering the results of this trial it became apparent that great benefit would result to the service if, in place of the 4-inch and 5-inch Breech-Loading Guns, at the present time mounted somewhat indiscriminately in ships of different classes, for the future a quick-firing gun could be substituted of intermediate size, with metallic cartridges carrying their own means of ignition.

After trials and experiments, a gun firing a projectile of 36 lbs. was selected as combining certain advantages which either a lighter or heavier gun would fail to secure. It is the largest gun that can, with a sufficient supply of ammunition, be carried by the torpedo gunboats (the smallest ships in the service), and the heaviest which can be worked with a shoulder-piece for training, a great object in the delivery of a rapid and accurate fire against the attack of torpedo boats.

Very greatly increased rapidity of fire has been obtained from this gun; with its special mounting and ammunition, 10 rounds can be fired in a minute, as compared with two rounds a minute, the limit of rapidity with the present 4 and 5-inch B.L. guns. This gun in future new ships will supersede the 4 and 5-inch gun.

A 6-inch quick-firing gun to fire a projectile of 100 lbs. is under construction, and will soon be ready for trial; should this gun prove in all respects as satisfactory as the 36-pounder (which there is every reason for hoping), it will form a most valuable addition to naval armaments, without the disadvantage of introducing a gun of new calibre into the Naval Service.

The importance of the development of rapid firing guns can only be fully appreciated when it is borne in mind that in consequence of the great speed of future fighting ships, the practice from slow firing guns must be most uncertain on account of the rapid alteration of distance. The system of mounting connected with these quick-firing guns allows the firer to keep his eye along the sights on the object while training or elevating the gun himself. The operation of loading is quite independent of the firer, and means have been found for the electric ignition of the charge, the primers being so fitted that the electric circuit cannot be completed till the breech of the gun is completely closed. The firer can, therefore, press the trigger whenever the sights are aligned on the object, knowing that the gun cannot fire unless safe, and his whole attention is thus concentrated on the object he is firing at, with the additional advantage of being able to rectify any miscalculation of distance in the preceding discharge. Under such conditions rapid firing should conduce to accurate, rather than to wild practice.

It is intended for the future that the 36-pr. and the 6-inch 100-pr. quick-firing guns, together with the 9·2-inch 22-ton gun in the large unarmoured vessels, should be the main armament of Her Majesty's Navy for vessels other than armour-clads, supplemented in all cases by the light 3-pr. quick-firing gun.

During the past year 131 torpedoes have been manufactured and issued ready for service, and a further number of 126 will will have been issued by the end of the present financial year 1887-88.

It may be interesting to note the rapid growth of expenditure connected with Naval Ordnance, which the following table illustrates:—

Amount taken each year from 1881-82 *in Army and Navy Estimates respectively for Naval Ordnance.*

Year.	Army Votes.	Navy Votes.	TOTAL.
	£	£	£
1881-82	369,000	49,329	418,329
1882-83	616,033	63,990	680,023
1883-84	500,491	161,905	662,396
1884.85	500,000	185,580	685,580
1885-86	850,000	308,900	1,158,900
1886-87	1,000,000	599,900	1,599,900
1887-88	1,707,561	593,700	2,301,261
1888-89	—	2,177,638	2,177,638

EXPERIMENTS IN 1887-88.

Several important series of experiments have been conducted in 1887-88.

Extensive trials have been made with various systems of *torpedo ejecting apparatus*, including both submerged broadside tubes and above-water tubes. From these trials important information has been obtained, which will influence future torpedo armaments.

The experiments on "Resistance" have been continued for the purpose of ascertaining both the effect of torpedo explosions (either in contact with or at a distance from the hull), and the best mode of arranging net defences, booms, &c.

A large amount of work has also been done in perfecting the net defences of H.M. ships.

In view of the general introduction of steel armour-piercing projectiles and the great development of the steel manufacture in recent years, it has been decided to make a comprehensive series of trials on steel and steel-faced iron (or compound) armour plates. A modern breech-loading gun and the best projectiles (steel and chilled iron) will be used. All the leading English steel makers have given their support to the proposal, and will supply experimental plates. The commencement of the trials has been delayed from various causes, but most of the armour plates have been made, and the firing will be proceeded with as soon as possible. The results will be of great importance both to the Royal Navy and to English manufacturers.

NEW WORKS.

The works vote is so compiled as to comprise contributions to subsidized docks and the cost of of all the establishments in connection with the Works Department at the Outports; and including these services, the amount asked for in 1888-89, compared with that granted in 1887-88, shows a reduction of £92,000. This decrease is due partly to no sums being required for the subsidy of Colonial docks, and partly to an adherence to the rule laid down last year by the Board, under which it was decided to fully utilize existing accommodation before approval is given to an extension of buildings.

The final payments to the dock companies at Esquimalt and Hong Kong, on the completion of their undertakings, have been made. The first will accommodate a vessel of the "Northampton" or "Nelson" type, and the second will dock any vessel in Her Majesty's Navy.

Provision is made for the commencement of the erection of barracks on Whale Island, Portsmouth, which will replace the old hulks now occupied by the Gunnery Establishment.

The necessary accommodation for torpedo boats at Portsmouth, Chatham, Malta, Esquimalt, Hong Kong, and Bermuda, is practically complete; that required at Gibraltar and the Cape is in course of construction.

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PERSONNEL OF THE NAVY.

The efficiency of the officers and men, judging from the reports received, and from the tests imposed during the past year, is very satisfactory. The manœuvres carried out after the Naval Review at Spithead, and the evolutions of squadrons abroad, resulted in unanimous testimony from the officers commanding that the standard of physique and efficiency of the Navy is exceptionally high. The conduct has been good, and there is a substantial reduction in sickness, invaliding, and deaths, the ratio of each being lower than last year and less than the average ratio of the last ten years.

The course of training and instruction, both physical and mental, through which the men pass seems to have most successfully attained its object; and the system of national and compulsory instruction, now in full operation, has so improved the education of the men that it has been found possible to curtail the number of schoolmasters afloat, and modify the educational arrangements on board sea-going ships.

Owing to the great reduction in the annual wastage of the Navy, the numbers borne last year were considerably in excess of the number estimated. The entries of boys have, therefore, been diminished temporarily. It is believed that without any further addition to Vote 1, it will be possible to provide all the officers and men required for the manning of the Australasian Squadron.

The mobilisation of the Fleet, by the commissioning of all available ships lsat summer, was effected with no greater strain than that of suspending for the time being the educational classes in the gunnery and torpedo ships, and the employment of the Officers at the College during the Vacation, and when all the available ships were commissioned, there were still available a large number of coastguard men and marines, in addition to the naval reserves which were untouched.

LIEUTENANTS' LIST.

The condition of the lieutenants' lists, and the very slow promotion to the higher grades which an investigation revealed, induced the Board to consider what steps could be taken to ameliorate their prospects, without detriment to the service generally.

Their present position is one of undoubted hardship. The number of lieutenants required to officer the ships in commission in peace, still more in the eventuality of war, is far in excess of the number required in the higher grades of commander and captain. The number of each rank is fixed with a regard to the requirements of the service, and the intake into the rank of lieutenant must necessarily be far in excess of the outlet by promotion. It was calculated a short time back that seven out of every nine on the present lists will be retired for want of promotion. In 1875 the number of lieutenants of sixteen and twenty years' service as Commissioned Officers was twelve and three respectively; the relative numbers are now two hundred and eight and fifty-three. At every half-yearly promotion there are numbers of capable and promising officers who are left out for want of vacancies. If it is inadvisable that the establishments above the rank of lieutenant should be increased, and if the promotion of lieutenants is retarded on grounds of public policy, it seemed only just that after a certain length of service their pay should be increased. This proposal has been assented to, and from the 1st April 1888 all lieutenants of eight years' seniority, who have completed six years' service, three of which shall have been in a ship of war at sea, will receive an addition of 2*s*. a day; also all lieutenants of twelve years' seniority who have completed nine years' service, six of which shall have been in a ship of war at sea, will receive an addition of 2*s*. a day; and lieutenants, when in independent command of any ship or tender, 1*s*. a day in addition to the above.

It has also been found necessary to increase the number of chief gunners, boatswains, and carpenters by ten, and of warrant officers by fifty, they being insufficient for the growth of work imposed on them; and with a view of encouraging a very deserving class, chief gunners and boatswains of three years' service will, on retirement, and at the discretion of the Admiralty, receive the retired rank of lieutenant, and the chief carpenter equivalent relative rank.

The number and variety of the allowances and ratings authorised for officers and men had obtained such dimensions and complexity, that it seemed very advisable that they should be simplified and regulated. A Committee has reported upon the subject, and their recommendations contain much that is valuable. They are now under consideration.

ROYAL MARINE FORCES.

The recruits who have offered themselves for these corps, both Artillery and Infantry, have been of good stature and excellent physique, and their education and conduct promise that in due course a large proportion will be eligible for non-commissioned officers.

The conduct of the men shows progressive improvement, and the reports of Inspections, including one by Field-Marshal H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, Commanding-in-Chief, gave high praise both to officers and men for their efficiency in all the exercises through which they were put.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

The various training and educational institutions connected with the naval, marine, and dockyard services have in the past been scattered among different votes in the estimates, and were under no one responsible head at the Admiralty. With a view of ensuring uniformity and continuity in their administration, they have been placed under the Second Naval Lord who is responsible for the manning of the Navy. A number of changes and alterations have in consequence been made, of which the following are the chief.

A Council of Naval Education has been established, of which the President of the Royal Naval College, the Director of Studies, and the Captain of the "Britannia," are permanent members, the Captains of "Excellent" and "Vernon," the Chief Instructor of Cadets, Chaplain of the Fleet, Deputy-Adjutant-General of Marines and Engineer-in-Chief, being associated for special purposes. Questions of naval education connected with the "Britannia," Service Afloat, the College, Engineer and Training Establishments, Gunnery and Torpedo Schools will be referred to the Council for report.

The examination, both in seamanship and at the College, for the rank of Lieutenant has been revised with the view of bringing it more into accord with the altered conditions of modern seamanship.

It is contemplated to reduce the number of students at the Engineer Colleges supported by Naval Funds, and to admit a proportion of the Acting Assistant Engineers who go to Greenwich College for the conclusion of their training, direct to that College by open competition from outside the Service.

The number of Engineers' Officers will hereafter be limited, but an increase will be made to the Chief Engine Room Artificers. The arrangements for this alteration are in progress towards completion.

ORGANIZATION OF THE FLEET.

In considering and settling the many subsidiary questions which arise in connection with the conversion of a peace establishment into one ready for war, the Intelligence Department has been most useful. The head of the Department has shown a remarkable aptitude for his work, and he has been well supported by the officers under him. The amount and nature of the information collated and distributed must necessarily be kept secret, but the work of the branch connected with the mobilization of the Fleet, and the utilization of Naval Reserves and resources, may roughly be sketched.

The main principle underlying the scheme has been to make each of the three great commands—Portsmouth, Devonport, and Sheerness—as far as possible self-supporting, by dividing the whole country into three districts, and sending all men from the same district to the same port. To arrange that, the various officers connected with the manning should man the ships under the superintendence of their respective Commanders-in-Chief, and to place these officers in direct communication with those in charge of the Reserves.

The men having been called out in the manner provided by law, each Commander-in-Chief becomes responsible for obtaining the men he requires for the ships in his port without reference to the Admiralty.

The complements for each ship have been drawn up, and a new classification of the ranks and ratings made, which Return will be issued quarterly.

These new arrangements have been tried experimentally at Portsmouth, and the Commander-in-Chief, in reporting the result, said—

"The officers of the various depôt ships have taken a great interest in carrying out the details of the scheme, and with a very satisfactory result. A signal was made at 1 p.m. on the 27th ult., and before 4 o'clock complete returns were rendered from each depôt ship of the appropriation of petty officers and men for all ships in and preparing for the First Class Steam Reserve, the torpedo boats, and armed merchant steamers. It will be observed that the crews are in each case practically complete, and there can be no doubt that a great advance has been made towards the speedy manning of the Fleet in case of sudden necessity."

"It must be remembered that in this instance the officers of the depôt ships have taken a strong personal interest in the scheme, being aware that it is novel and on its trial."

"So long as the executive officers will personally give the time and trouble necessary to work out the details, there will not be any difficulty with the present forms in manning all available ships in the course of 48 hours."

With the object of placing our Reserves of Officers on a satisfactory footing, the lists of retired officers have been carefully examined, and all eligible for employment have been asked if ready to serve in an emergency. Steps have also been taken towards instituting a gunnery and torpedo course for retired officers, and for placing them, when called out for service, on the same footing as officers on the active list.

ARMED MERCANTILE CRUISERS.

Special provision has been made in this year's Estimates for the armament and clothing connected with the manning of these vessels, and arrangements are nearly complete for their rapid commissioning.

COALING AND SUPPLIES OF COAL.

Considerable advance has been made in this all-important matter. The supplies of coal required at home and foreign stations, and the best means of obtaining them, have been carefully considered.

A number of lighters have been ordered for facilitating the coaling of our ships afloat both on the home and foreign stations, arrangements have been made for taking up cruiser colliers and coaling outfits to be used by colliers in company with a fleet will be stored at various places at home and abroad. We hope during the year to be able to make some progress with works at Portland for unloading sea-borne and railway-carried coal; but until the plans have been more carefully investigated and accurate estimates produced, I did not consider it advisable to sanction any premature expenditure.

CONCLUSION.

The experience gained since last year, and the opportunities afforded during that time of making close and minute comparison between the strength of the Navy of this country and that of foreign nations confirms my previous statement, that our relative superiority is undoubted, and that we shall, if the present expenditure be maintained, each year increase that superiority. Our organization for war has much improved during the last year, and satisfactory progress has been made in working out and fitting together the complementary parts of a scheme for the full utilization in time of emergency of the naval resources of the country. Looking, however, at the three main component parts of a fleet, ships, guns, and men, we have no reason to be dissatisfied with what we have got, if we take not an ideal standard, but that common to the Fleets of our neighbours. The ships recently completed and commissioned have fulfilled on the whole the undertaking of their designers, and although one or two casualties have occurred in the past in the manufacture of our larger guns, out of the great number issued during the last 18 months for service none have in any sense failed.

The determination of the Government to effectively arm the coaling stations abroad and the home ports must largely increase our offensive naval power, for the bases of operation from which our Fleet can issue will require little or no naval defence.

But if it is permissible to speak with confidence of our superiority so far as actual fighting power is concerned, when we consider the defence and protection which our commerce may require, extreme caution and reserve must be exercised. The conditions of naval warfare have so changed, and are so changing from day to day, that nothing but actual experience could justify any confident prediction as to how a thoroughly effective protection can be given by any fleet to a commerce whose sea-going steam tonnage is double that of the rest of the world.

In the revision and preparation of our present Estimates we have made provision for all immediate requirements, and we have not hesitated in every direction to cut off extraneous and questionable expenditure. But new wants may more than counterbalance future economies, and it would, therefore, not be safe in our judgment to attempt hereafter to place at a lower total than the aggregate sums to be spent this year upon naval objects, the future annual expenditure of the Navy.

GEORGE HAMILTON.

28*th February*, 1888.

APPENDIX.

Having most fully examined and considered the design and the provision made for ensuring the safety of the "Wasp" as a sea-going vessel, we are most distinctly of opinion that the utmost care was taken to provide in every respect for the safety of the "Wasp," against all contingencies which could be humanly foreseen, with regard to seaworthiness, and that she was, in all such respects far superior to any gunboat which has been built for the Naval Service.

(Signed) A. W. A. HOOD.
A. H. HOSKINS.
W. GRAHAM.
CHARLES BERESFORD

13*th Dec.*, 1887.

SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM OF THE ADMIRALTY.—RESOLUTION.

Lord CHARLES BERESFORD (Marylebone, E.), in rising to call attention to the system of administration at the Admiralty, and to move, "That the allocation of authority requires entire reform," said, he would feel grateful to the House if it would allow him to make a few remarks connected with his resignation as a Member of the Board of Admiralty; and also to make a few comments on the speech of the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton), made outside the House, relative to some observations he had made to his constituents on that resignation. He trusted that nothing he would say would be construed into an attack, covert or open, on the Government, or upon his late Colleagues. Neither did he wish it to be thought that he was impugning the administration or capacity of those Gentlemen who preceded the Board in Office; but he intended, to the best of his ability, to attack the system under which they worked with all the vigour and energy at his command. It was generally believed that his resignation was based on a question of £900. That was only in part true. What he really resigned on was the question of system which existed at the Admiralty—the question of system which allowed that reduction of salaries of the Intelligence Department of the Admiralty to be made in the manner it was made. The first day he sat on the Board of Admiralty he asked the First Lord whether, if he wrote any paper which he might consider necessary for the reform of any question connected with the Royal Navy, he would ever exercise the power which he possessed of not allowing that paper to be criticized by his Colleagues? The First Lord of the Admiralty said that he did not think that very likely, as he himself had instituted the right of protest. He (Lord Charles Beresford) also said, that as long as he sat at the Board, where there were men of so much greater experience, far higher in seniority, and far higher in rank than himself, he treated them outside the Board with that courtesy and respect which that higher rank called for, but that on the Board he intended to have his say level with everybody else. He had also spoken publicly on this question of the right of the First Lord. When he was in Office he spoke in the country on it, and attributed to that right the inefficiency and unpreparedness of the Navy. Even in March last year in this House he again referred to the question of that right, and objected to it. He mentioned this in order to show that he did not resign in a hurry. In public he had stated that there was no "shred of a system of any sort for organization for war before the present Board was in Office." He intended to substantiate that statement. In doing so, he would refer to the recorded opinion of the First Lord himself, as stated in his Memorandum of last year—

> "Although many of the component and complementary parts of the Navy are in themselves satisfactory, it has long been felt by naval men of experience and foresight that, in the event of war, unless an improved system of co-operation and preparation were devised, the nation would not obtain, in the earlier stages of such a contest, the full advantage of its great naval resources. This opinion was confirmed by the experience of 1885. Confidential reports of what then occurred proved that our power of naval mobilization was most defective. A rapid concentration of strength, and an immediate and effective use of the force thus brought together, have in recent years decided within a few weeks of the outbreak of war the ultimate issue of that war . . . . . All well-organized Military Powers have derived infinite advantages from a properly-constituted Intelligence Department; but the need, as I have shown, for such an organization, is greater for naval than military purposes. This country has the largest fleet afloat, yet hitherto it had no central organization by which that fleet could be thoroughly utilized in emergency."

In his Statement he had stated that there was no scheme of organization for war in the Admiralty. There was a paper on mobilization, but it had never been sent to the Commanders-in-Chief; it had never been tried or thought out in order to see how it would act. The First Lord referred to the subject again in his recent Memorandum, where he stated that—

> "New arrangements have been tried, experimentally at Portsmouth, and the Commander-in-Chief, in reporting the result, said—'The officers of the various depôt ships have taken a great interest in carrying out the details of

the scheme, and with a very satisfactory result. . . . It must be remembered that in this instance the officers of the depôt ships have taken a strong personal interest in the scheme, being aware that it is novel and on its trial."

In his speech the First Lord said that, as far as the present Board was concerned, the other subjects connected with organization for war were scattered and distributed among the various branches of the office. He challenged his noble Friend to produce any plan of campaign for home or abroad, any plan for coaling the fleet, any plan for the protection of the mercantile marine, or any organization for war whatever except that paper on mobilization which he described as being most defective. He could quite believe that the clerks in the Department told the First Lord that such plans existed; but he knew, at all events, that they did not exist, because he had tried, as much as possible, to find them before he wrote his Memorandum in 1886, just after joining the Board. The question of salaries was supposed by many persons to be the immediate cause of his resignation. After the question was all settled last May he noticed in the papers which were marked to every Member of the Board, a letter from the Treasury to the Admiralty relating to the Intelligence Department salaries. He observed that those papers were not marked to three seamen who were on the original Committee appointed to find out and settle what the duties and the salaries of the new Department were to be. He called attention to the matter by a minute. Knowing what the finding of that Committee was, he wrote on the outside of the sheet a statement to the effect that, with great respect to the First Lord, if anything was done to affect the efficiency of this Department he should resign his position on the Board. His reason for taking this step was that, first of all, he was anxious to see nothing done which should at all hamper a Department on which, he believed, the safety of the country depended; and, secondly, he was quite satisfied that he was right in doing this, because the four Naval Lords were unanimous on the point, as well as the Permanent Secretary to the Admiralty. The Committee stated that they were unanimous in making the foregoing recommendations, and also in strongly urging the absolute necessity, in the interests of the country, of the appointment of the staff proposed at once, in order that the much-needed plan of organization in preparation for war may be prepared with the least possible delay. The Committee also recommended the provision of £900, in order that the Naval Intelligence Department might begin work at once. This recommendation was signed by Sir A. Hood, Sir A. Hoskins, Sir W. Graham, Lord Charles Beresford, and Mr. Macgregor. Nothing could have been stronger than the recommendations of this document. He did not deny that it was possible his noble Friend might have had some conversation with those Sea Lords. He himself had had conversations with them, and they said that they were not at all sure that the salaries were not too high. He sent for the papers again, and called attention to the fact that there was some kind of doubt. One of the best officers belonging to the Department sent in his resignation after the Department had been made inferior to other Departments by the reduction of salaries.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): That was not the ground of his resignation.

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD said, he was aware that the officer in question sent in his resignation on the ground of ill-health; but that officer had told him that his resignation was due to the cause previously stated, and he was prepared to give evidence to that effect if a Royal Commission was granted to inquire into the administration of the Navy. This was in May. In November he again noticed some correspondence, and again called attention to the fact on the outside of the sheet that the Naval Lords were unanimous as far as he knew. Matters went on in this unsatisfactory state, until at last his noble Friend closed the correspondence, though he knew that he would lose a Colleague, and though he saw that four Naval Lords were unanimous. He tried to re-open the question; but that was refused, and the only thing left to him was to carry out what he had put on Paper. That might be a minor point; but he said that it showed the system. The First Lord then ordered a letter to be sent to the Treasury, saying—"My Lords agree to the reduction of the salaries;"

but what possible responsibility had the Board of Admiralty in that matter? That was the method that was employed in far greater matters than that of the reduction of the salaries of the Intelligence Department. He confessed that that was the first time since he went to the Admiralty that his noble Friend the First Lord ever so used that power which he undoubtedly possessed. He had said the other day that there was no such thing as Treasury or Parliamentary control, and he maintained that there was not. He could not help thinking that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer had seen the evidence of the four seamen and had seen the First Lord before he changed his opinion, he would have agreed to what he (Lord Charles Beresford) held out for in regard to the salaries of the Intelligence Department. The salaries were only *pro tem.*, and he only asked that they should be kept on *pro tem.* until the whole of the Admiralty was re-organized, in order that the Intelligence Department might not be made inferior to the other Departments of the Admiralty. The salaries might possibly have been too high; but it was wrong to treat the Intelligence Department as inferior to the other Departments. The Treasury could only exercise control on the occasion of new appointments or the reorganization of old. But since they had reduced the salaries of the Intelligence Department the Treasury had granted to other appointments higher salaries. The Treasury could only go by what was an officer's rank and position. There were two officers of the Intelligence Department with the rank of post captain; they were both assistants to the head of the Intelligence Department. After their salaries were reduced to £700 a-year there were two other officers, also of the rank of post captains, and assistants to the heads of other Departments, who were appointed; but they got an increase of pay, and higher pay than that of the two officers whose pay he contended should not have been reduced, for one received £750 and the other £950. It was perfectly clear that one of those officers was worth £10,000 a-year, or anything they liked to pay him; but he wanted to know on what principle the Treasury had acted in those cases so differently? The First Lord of the Admiralty had said that every officer had undoubtedly the clearest intimation that his salary might be reduced. Such a notification as that depended entirely on the precise words used. The notification that the appointment was subject to possible future modification as to salary, and that a further communication would be made before the 31st of March next as to the tenure and terms of the office, would hardly lead any hon. Member to expect that 10 to 28 per cent would be the sort of reduction which had been made in those officers' salaries. The only notification they got was a notice from a banker telling them that they had to refund certain moneys. That was a pretty way of having business done. He thought that that one thing alone, feeling keenly about it as he did, would have justified his resigning, and since his resignation he observed that one of those marine officers had been given back £100 of the reduced pay. He would now refer to his noble Friend's Memorandum. As far as the Memorandum went, it was impossible that anything would be more clear, more practical, more able, or could give the Navy more satisfaction. It was an immense step in the right direction, and he hoped that his noble Friend, after he had heard his speech, would make another advance in the same direction and go a great deal further. There were most important naval innovations in that Memorandum. He noticed that there was a document with his hon. Friend the Secretary of the Admiralty's name attached to it. It was a real step in the direction of reform, to make a man responsible to Parliament by putting his name at the bottom of a document of that kind. He would next advert to the document relative to the seaworthiness of the *Wasp*. It was on lines such as that that he and a great number of naval officers wanted to see the opinions of experts presented to Parliament. Those who were responsible for different Departments of the Admiralty ought to put their names down, as the Secretary to the Admiralty had done, and as the four seamen had done in regard to the *Wasp*. Then if anybody had done anything that was wrong he could be held practically responsible for it, which was not the case now. In his printed explanatory statement on the Estimates the Secretary of the Admiralty said—

> "In an Imperial Service of the importance of the Navy, which has to maintain establishments not merely for current requirements but to meet possible national emergencies, there must of necessity be a large expenditure due to the special circumstances of a national establishment, and which cannot equitably be charged to the work performed thereat."

Now, the national emergencies there referred to depended of course on the policy of the Cabinet. No expert wanted to interfere with the policy of the Cabinet; but the policy of the Cabinet might run them into one of those national emergencies within 24 hours, but you could not build a first class fighting ship under three years, and that might put them in the position of having to call upon the Fleet. They would be anxious as long as they did not know accurately what position their Fleet might have to be in; that was to say, were they perfectly prepared for one of those occasions of national emergency? That was very much the line of debate which they took the other night when they asked to know how they stood. The seamen of the Fleet might be called upon to carry out some duty in such an emergency, and they knew perfectly well that under certain conditions they would not be prepared to do what was expected of them by the country. With regard to the *Wasp*, the First Lord knew perfectly well that if he merely said that the *Wasp* was all right, his statement would be worthless; but the object of his Memorandum was to re-assure Parliament and the country and those officers and men who had to go to sea in sister ships, and therefore he got the four seamen's names to the document. He wanted to bring the same system as that which was exemplified in the statement about the *Wasp* right through the entire administration of the Admiralty, and through every Department which was supposed to be responsible, but which now was not really so. When all things went well under the present system the First Lord of the Admiralty spoke for the whole Navy and for every detail; but directly anything went wrong the responsibility was thrown on the seamen. All the information contained in his noble Friend's memorandum was derived, not from his noble Friend himself, because he knew nothing about it—how could he know? He knew a great deal, no doubt; but how could he know all the information that he put in his Memorandum, and that he was supposed to be responsible for? It was all given by somebody else—by the heads of departments. But he found fault with the present system because there was no real responsibility thrown on those who gave the First Lord that information; each of them could say or withhold just as much as he liked. How often had they seen Ministers responsible for the Navy get up and make a statement that the Navy was all right, and prepared to do any duty that might be required of it, thus painting everything in the most glowing colours, and yet within two years afterwards, because the silent members of the Board had not been allowed to show the country what were the real facts, everything was suddenly found to be all wrong, and scare and panic immediately followed? And what was the result? Scares and panic and the most wicked and scandalous waste. On page 22 of the First Lord's Memorandum the Noble Lord said—

> "The experience gained since last year, and the opportunities afforded during that time of making close and minute comparison between the strength of the Navy of this country and that of foreign nations, confirms my previous statement that our relative superiority is undoubted."

Now, that was a very good statement so far as it went, but there was not a seaman in the Fleet who would put his name to it, because it might be read the wrong way. It represented what might be called the book-keeping way of measuring the strength of the Navy, simply adding up two columns of names in order to see whether we had more iron-clads than any other country. That was not the way to account for the Navy at all; the point to be considered was—What had our Navy got to do as compared with other Navies? The noble Lord went on to say—

> "The conditions of naval warfare have so changed, and are so changing from day to day, that nothing but actual experience could justify any confident prediction as to how a thoroughly effective protection can be given by any Fleet to a commerce whose sea-going steam tonnage is double that of the rest of the world."

No seaman would put his name to that either, for it was equivalent to saying "Wait till you have lost your all, and then see what you ought to have had and what you ought to have done." Again, he wished to say that he did not blame his noble Friend, but he maintained that the sentences quoted conveyed a false impression to the country. That was his point. The country must know that the First Lord was totally ignorant of technical questions. [*Laughter, and cheers from the Opposition.*] Well, it was perfectly true, and he would go further and say that no soldier even understood these questions—the First Lord simply got his information from his experts—and what he wanted to see was men's names put down for what they were responsible, and then it would be seen whether the Minister was giving his own opinion or the opinion of his experts. He wanted to see the name of the responsible head of the Department at the bottom of every statement affecting the particular Department, instead of being vouched by the First Lord, and then, if anything went wrong in that Department, he would try the man responsible by court-martial. Nothing of the kind could be done now, because there was no responsibility. The First Lord had often referred to the difference of opinion among experts. Just as doctors differed as to where a leg ought to come off, or architects as to the style in which a house ought to be built, so, no doubt, naval experts differed as to how the efficiency of the Navy ought to be increased, but all agreed that the thing must be done. The experts could discuss the matter, and when they came together the First Lord could then use his power [Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: Hear, hear!] But it was not done in that way. The reduction of the salaries of the Intelligence Department was done off the First Lord's own bat, and he had not, when he changed his mind, consulted his Board at all. He was not raking up these matters because he had resigned Office. He said and did the same things when in Office, and gave proof of his sincerity by declining to sign the Estimates last year. A clerk came to him in the office about 11 o'clock in the morning with some documents and a wet pen in his hand, and asked him to sign. He said—"What am I to sign?" "The Estimates," was the reply. "I? Certainly not;" he said, "I have not seen them. If I put my name to those Estimates people will think I have read them, and studied them, and am satisfied with them; whereas I have neither read them nor studied them, and I am not at all sure that I should be satisfied with them." And so he did not put his name to them. He was afterwards told that it really did not signify very much whether he signed or not; it was all right. He said that was a very bad way of doing business. With regard to the amount of savings set forth in the Memorandum, he hoped a wrong impression would not get abroad about them. They had been effected by the most excellent administration on the part of the First Lord. The noble Lord had not saved the money out of the sums voted by Parliament last year, but by looking after the details of manufacture, dock-yard management, material, and so on; and he had actually got work and more value for the money voted, although he showed a saving. Nobody could give the First Lord too much credit for the way he had worked, but not one of the points dealt with had anything to do with organization for war—that was the great point. As the First Lord knew well, he had written several letters on the question of a war organization. He was much dissatisfied with it when at the Admiralty. He called attention to the subject again and again, and he was not at all sure whether he should not think it his duty (leaving out what was called the confidential parts of those letters) to take the public into his confidence by publishing them. He was glad that the Board had seen their way to grant some slight increase of pay to the lieutenants, who were the backbone of the services, and were splendid instances of patriotism and discipline. Although they had been in a hopeless position for years, they had never growled nor grumbled, but had loyally done their duty. He hailed with great pleasure, too, the loyalty of the Australian Colonies in coming to build and equip ships in order to help us quite as much as themselves. To return to the question of war organization. The table of the distribution of the business of the Admiralty was a most curious document. No foreigner would believe it. What first drew his attention to the subject was that in the Estimates there was not a single mention of war organization from top to bottom. It was not in it. It was nobody's duty to look after this important work; and, considering that war organization in every other country was, in fact, the War Office and the Admiralty themselves, the House could imagine his astonishment when he went to the Admiralty and found there was no kind of war organization on the paper at all. The present Controller of the Navy (Sir W. Graham) was a most able man, and to him was mainly due the enormous reforms which had been carried out in the Dockyards, but it was utterly impossible for him, though he might work all day and most of the night, to perform the work he was responsible for. That being so, there could not be that efficiency in the Fleet which was necessary. The Controller had 17 subjects to look after, which was more than any one man could attend to. He had taken the Controller first because he was responsible for the money. He would take next the First Sea Lord. He had 19 subjects. His position was a most serious, a most responsible one, but he was encumbered with a number—an enormous mass—of frivolous matters and small details which ought to be removed from him altogether. The Second Sea Lord had 13 subjects, and a great deal of his work was frivolous. It might be done by a far smaller person than a Lord of the Admiralty, and he a distinguished Admiral. He had, for instance, to sign little pensions, which ought to be done by a paymaster under the Financial Secretary. Then the Junior Lord had 19 subjects to look after. For that he had received £1,200 a-year, but really he had very little to do at all. This was the position he (Lord Charles Beresford) held; but the duties with which he was charged were so trivial that he had very little to do at all, and that was why he thought the other Naval Lords, who were enormously overworked, ought to have his salary of £1,000 a-year divided between them. To show how the other three Naval Lords were overworked, he need only mention that although in March last the Director of the Naval Intelligence Department brought forward a most important paper relative to the organization of our Fleet in the Mediterranean waters, the matter had not yet been touched at all. The only reason for that was overwork and bad distribution of business. It was all very well to say as to some matters which had been delayed, as, for instance, War Organization, "Oh, it is all in the First Sea Lord's head." Why, if he had a head as big as a line of battle ship he could not hold it all. Then others said that they should wait to see what the enemy was going to do, but that would not answer in these days of steam. Therefore their system ought to be perfect in every detail. Their Channel Fleet, their Mediterranean Fleet, ought to be so organized—at least the Channel Fleet should be so organized—that they could concentrate without delay at Portsmouth or Plymouth or wherever it was desired. Until that was done it was idle to say that the plan of campaign or the organization was complete in somebody's head. He held that the present distribution of business was utterly unsuited to the modern requirements of the day. He should like—he should be greatly interested—to see Sir W. Graham produce one day's papers that he had to settle. He should also before the Royal Commission be interested in seeing what his Friend and very cordial Colleague Sir A. Hoskins would say if asked what would he have done in 1885 if the Fleet he was to have commanded had been ordered to assemble in the Downs and to go to the Baltic. He would, no doubt, tell them that they could not have left the Downs, because there was no organization—no coals, no ammunition, no gunboats, no torpedo-boats, or anything else necessary to enable them to fight. They would find at the end of the Estimates a list of the various Departments, and in each of these Departments they had what was only common sense, so many clerks and so many of a professional staff. But when they came to the office of the Administration of the First Lord of the Admiralty, which settled everything and determined the whole management of the Navy, they would find nothing of the sort. The only assistants there were clerks. Surely that was absurd. Surely they needed professional assistance there. No Government in the world could go on on such a system as this. He was not saying anything against the clerks individually; but they were in a wrong position. Why in the name of common sense should they not give the Lords of the Admiralty competent men to carry out the management of the Service? If they had competent men—naval officers—they would come there for a short time. [Lord George Hamilton: Hear, hear!] His noble Friend cheered that. That was so. It would enable them to carry on their work in a business-like style. There were 19 clerks with salaries of from £500 to £1,000 a-year. He said that was an enormous salary, and he said, further, that when the Royal Commission examined the salaries, and compared the salaries with the knowledge of the subjects they had to deal with and their responsibility, the comparison would be ruinous to the system. Let them have someone who knew how to give orders, and how fleets should be managed. The wonderful thing was how the Admiralty had gone on. He believed it was accounted for by the fact that so many able men had done their level best in spite of the system. If there had been a real test—the test of war—they would have broken down, and the country would have suffered disaster. He was afraid he was detaining the House. Then there was a question about signals at sea, and one clerk had to go into a naval Lord's room to ask what it all meant. A ship was lost south of the Line, and one of the men-of-war had been ordered to look after refugees on a certain island. There happened at that time to be another ship coming home, and one of the clerks suggested that this ship also should join in the search. According to the chart the island was only three or four inches out of the way of the latter ship. But the ship would have been taken 4,000 miles out of her course. He was not saying a word against these gentlemen, who were zealous public servants; the fault was that of the system. As long as they kept their system as it was, they would have the Navy as inefficient as they (the seamen) told them it was. Having found all these faults, he would make a few practical suggestions. A reform was wanted in the relations subsisting between the Navy and the Mercantile Marine. He would also like it to be impossible for the First Lord to rule the Navy without consulting the Board at all. It was quite possible now—though except on one occasion his noble Friend had never done so. Next, a total redistribution of business was wanted, especially in the Controller's Department. The head of the Intelligence Department should be an Admiral. Thirdly, an alteration was required in the appointment of Sea Lords. The Controller should be there for five years and the others only for three years, and each year one should retire, quite irrespectively of Party considerations. The present system upset everything. Besides, by this arrangement fresh blood would always be pouring into the Admiralty—men straight from sea, who knew what they were talking about. They were all good men there at present, but under the system there might be men in command who knew nothing of modern requirements, and might never have even been in a torpedo boat. Fourthly, the secretarial department ought to be re-constructed entirely, in which there should be found commanders, lieutenants, or paymasters capable of understanding the orders they might have to frame for the Fleet. These also should only stay for three years and have permanent clerks under them. The result of this would not be to give more power to the experts, but to distribute responsibility and strengthen the hands of the First Lord. There was no real responsibility now. These reforms were connected with business, but other arrangements were wanted as soon as possible for war organization. There should be an amendment in the system of training seamen, and there should be a sea-going gunnery ship. Some reforms were no doubt being effected, but they would probably take years to complete under the present system. Changes, too, were needed in the non-combatant service, and in the signal department, which should be given a warrant rank. Greater latitude should also be given to Commanders-in-Chief, both at home and abroad; and a new system of signalling between the Navy and the mercantile marine, so that vessels might change their route in time of war. At present we were liable, in case of war, to lose hundreds and thousands of tons of shipping because this was not carried out. One Commander-in-Chief had written to him that he had to devise his own plan of campaign, and had received no information as to the assistance he might expect or as to his coal supplies. To a certain extent, no doubt, the system of war organization was improving, but that improvement was not going on half fast enough, and could not until the present Admiralty system was reformed. They must reform from the top, not from the bottom. Fifthly, coast defence ought to be thoroughly organized, and the second-class reserve men should be organized on the same lines as lifeboat crews at present were. Sixthly, arrangements should be made as to coaling at sea. Seventhly, there ought to be means of adding to the Admiralty in time of war. It was utterly impossible that with the present system the Admiralty could do what it would have to do in time of war. Further, the shipbuilding policy should depend on the necessities of defence without regard to Party or a popular Budget. The First Lord in one of his speeches had under-rated the value of the Intelligence Department; but his noble Friend, he maintained, was quite incapable of knowing the value of that department for organization for war. How should he? Why, even some of the officers of the Service could not always see what was necessary to win an action. How, then, should the First Lord know the value of such a department? In fact, the Intelligence Department ought to be the brains of the whole Service, and the best men ought to be in it. His noble Friend had said, that if there were any agitation or excitement it would be the sailors who would be turned out of the Admiralty and not the civilians; that was not a wise threat, or one likely to be carried out. There was a good deal of anxiety both in this country and the colonies as to the administration and efficiency of the Navy. What the country wanted was practical suggestions from the experts as to the organization of the Navy — men who knew what they were talking about. He had been asked why his colleagues did not resign with him. One reason was that they did not write M.P. after their names. The only way to get reform was by moving that House. His colleagues and naval men might write to *The Times*, or have their grumble in "Rule Britannia" after dinner speeches, and this they did sometimes because they were proud of the service; but that was not the same thing as addressing the House of Commons. For the first time an estimate had been produced which did give clear Parliamentary control over shipbuilding and manufacture, but it had nothing to do with the efficiency of the Fleet, and of that Parliament had no guarantee of any sort but what the First Lord of the Admiralty chose to tell them. He had said nothing in his speech which need provoke a scare. He had not asked for any extravagant outlay. All he had asked was that the administration of the Admiralty should be conducted on business principles. He had only asked for good organization and sound business principles. A squadron on a foreign station was more important to this country than an Army Corps was to Germany, because an Army Corps might be replaced, whereas if we lost a squadron we could not replace it until it was too late, and had lost our mercantile interests on that station. He might observe that many of the papers which he wrote at the Admiralty calling attention principally to this question of war organization, were agreed to by his Colleagues, but nothing was done. With regard to his resignation, he felt genuine regret at leaving his Colleagues, especially his chief, who was an old personal friend of his. He felt, however, that all the trouble occasioned by his resignation would have served some useful purpose if, after hearing his statement, the House consented to the appointment of a special Royal Commission to investigate the matter he now complained of, and determine whether he was right or wrong. In conclusion, he begged to move the Motion which stood in his name.

MR. SPEAKER: The noble and gallant Gentleman should add at the end of his Resolution some such words as "In the administrative system of the Admiralty."

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD said, he was quite ready to make the addition suggested.

ADMIRAL MAYNE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest) said, he rose for the purpose of seconding the Motion, and in doing so he wished to repudiate any desire of making a personal attack upon the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton), or on any of the Members, or of the Board of Admiralty of which the noble Lord was the head. He did this more particularly because he knew that it was said, even within the walls of that House, that this was an attack on the part of his noble and gallant Friend the Member for East Marylebone (Lord

Charles Beresford) against his late Chief and his late Colleagues, and that it was part of a scheme for discrediting their administration. So far from that being the case, he begged to say, on his own behalf, and he believed he might say on behalf of the Service generally, that the noble Lord and his present Colleagues had done great things for the Navy, although he did not think that they had always done so either with that deliberation or that consideration for others which they might have shown. He wished to show the House that it was impossible to govern the Navy under the present system, and that it had never been done properly, and that though the responsibility ought to rest with the First Lord—and was always supposed to have so rested—unfortunately, whenever a serious difficulty occurred, the First Lord showed no anxiety to take it upon himself. What he wanted to see was that the responsibility of the First Lord should not be a myth, but that it should be given in such a way that it would be impossible to escape it by those who ought to answer for the condition of the Fleet. The noble and gallant Lord had spoken of the Intelligence Department, and if the Admiralty had had the most remote conception of what that Department ought to be—and what it must be before long—there would not have been a quarrel over such a paltry matter as the pay of the Department. The Intelligence Department was copied from Germany, but it was a bad copy. As one small example of the wonderful system which he condemned, he would remind the House that none of the authorities could agree as to when intelligence was first shown at the Admiralty. We were told by some gallant officers that it had been in existence for 25 years. On the other hand, they were told by no less an officer than Sir Geoffrey Hornby in *The Times*, that it did not exist to any appreciable extent when, years after that, he wished to know, at the time the country was expected to go to war, about the coaling resources of the country we were about to go to war with. That gallant officer was unable to get any information from the Admiralty, and he had to go to the War Office in order to obtain the information he required. It would surprise the House to learn what had occurred at the time the right hon. Gentleman the present Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) was at the head of the Admiralty. It was found that there were no means of communicating by telegraph with any of our Admirals in command at foreign stations, because the private code books were only supplied to those officers who had the least need of them—namely, the Admirals in command of the home ports. The Commander-in-Chief in North America had found that he had no means of communicating privately with the Governor General of Canada. Sir Geoffrey Hornby strongly urged that the Intelligence Department should not be cramped in its first starting; but this was exactly what had been done, for though the scheme of salaries provided for an Admiral at the head of the Department, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would never agree to the increased amount when the First Lord admitted that a Captain was enough. He (Admiral Mayne) wished to show the House that the Admiralty had never been efficient, and that it had at no time satisfied the requirements of the country or of the Navy. When the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty talked of his taking responsibility, it was not an original notion. The noble Lord was not the first individual who had talked of the responsibility of the First Lord. Before the Special Committee of 1861 Sir James Graham claimed that he was responsible for all that went on at the Admiralty, and Sir Francis Baring, when asked if he agreed with Sir James Graham, said that he did. The Duke of Somerset being pressed to say whether he was responsible for such a detail as the selection of ships for reliefs of foreign stations, replied that he was. In the first instance, he said that the responsibility rested with him and the First Sea Lord, but that if he chose to interfere, it rested with the First Lord. That was the view which had been held by First Lords for a long time, and it was made more prominent by an Order in Council when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) was at the head of the Admiralty.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.) said, he begged the hon. and gallant Member's pardon. What he did was precisely the reverse. He made the First Sea Lord responsible, ADMIRAL MAYNE said, that the right hon. Gentleman, by an Order in Council, made the responsibility of the First Lord more definite and prominent.

MR. CHILDERS said, the special object of the Order in Council was to make each Naval Lord, and especially the First Sea Lord, responsible, instead of treating the Naval Lords as a small Committee.

ADMIRAL MAYNE said, his opinion and that of the right hon. Gentleman differed altogether as to the effect of that Order in Council. Although full responsibility was claimed in that House by the First Lord, in the event of disaster the blame was always allowed to rest elsewhere. He had no wish to go too far back, but the same system had been going on for more than 200 years, and he recollected no instance in which the First Lord had claimed the responsibility where there was any real danger. When Admiral Byng was tried at Plymouth, did the First Lord come forward and say that he was responsible for sending out that officer to relieve Minorca with 10 under-manned battle ships to stop a landing by the French in Minorca which had taken place before he could get there, under cover of 12 battle ships and a number of frigates? On the contrary, he allowed Admiral Byng to be tried. Why did not the First Lord say—"I was responsible, entirely responsible, for all that occurred," and save that unfortunate officer, whose gallantry was undeniable, from an unjust sentence? Then, in Nelson's time was the Admiralty satisfactory? He would not quote from the more fiery spirits then afloat, but from the courageous and noble but long suffering Collingwood. What was it that that gallant officer said? He wrote, after Trafalgar—

> "I never hear from England. The Admiralty seem to have so much business in other quarters that they cannot attend to me. If they could send me a few more ships I should not care, but I am very much pinched for force to spread over the extensive seas which I have to range. Nothing could have been more neglectful than the Admiralty had been."

Jumping over the next 50 years he came to the Crimean war, circumstances attending which were in the memory of many hon. Members. It was evident that even then the Admiralty did not satisfy the country or the Service. Sir James Graham was First Lord, and before the 1861 Committee claimed full responsibility and supremacy at the Admiralty; but when Admiral Sir Charles Napier came home from the Baltic, did Sir James Graham take the blame upon his own shoulders for the failure—as the country thought it—of that expedition? Did he say—"I did not give Sir Charles Napier a single gunboat which was able to get within several miles of the forts which he is blamed for not taking?" It was not until 1855 that 150 gunboats were commenced, and they were completed just in time to take part in the great Naval Review which followed the Declaration of Peace in 1856, not having fired a single shot in anger. Did the First Lord then say—"I am responsible?" No; he allowed the responsibility to fall on the Commander-in-Chief. Knowledge of such facts made the Service anxious to get vessels of the right quality and in the right quantity, because they knew that the blame would always fall upon the naval officers in command. The present system of managing our Navy which had gone on for so long a time was utterly rotten, and he hoped that the result of the Royal Commission would be to tear it up by the roots and to found a new one in its place. He felt strongly the necessity for inquiry into the system which he so condemned by a Royal Commission, and if he did not follow the noble and gallant Lord in submitting a scheme, it was not because he had not got one, but because he thought the time of the House of Commons should not be occupied in discussing details. He was not vain enough to think that his silence might not be improved by a Committee or a Royal Commission; but he thought it had been pointed out by the noble and gallant Lord who had already addressed the House that an entirely new system was required. He had referred to what had occurred in 1854. At a later period a Committee sat in 1861. The Members of the Board of Admiralty were divided among themselves as to their respective duties and responsibilities, and there was no kind of continuity in the policy of the Board. Admiral Sir George Seymour was asked whether and to what extent he considered himself responsible for the advice he gave, and his answer was—

"I do not consider myself in the least liable to be told to walk out of the Admiralty by the First Lord. I do not consider myself Lord Addington's nominee. I can never consider it depends on the First Lord to remove me."

He was asked—

"Do you consider that there really was, in point of fact, a supremacy of the First Lord?"

And he replied—

"His position as a Cabinet Minister gave him a weight which one in that position should have; but I do not admit his being supreme."

Sir John Pakington, speaking of himself as First Lord, said—

"I never did feel on the Admiralty that I had either the knowledge or the control or the responsibility which I think the Minister who is at the head of so great a Department ought to have."

He added—

"It was hardly possible to regard the First Lord as being supreme among his Colleagues, and," he said, "he considered it a very awkward and difficult arrangement for the First Lord to assume a responsibility."

With these differences it was not a matter of surprise that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh when he came into Office, having read these conflicting opinions, should have said—"The best thing I could do is to make the matter clear." But, then, what happened? One of the first things that occurred was the appointment of a Controller of the Navy, and that was another of the many instances of want of continuity at the Admiralty. The unfortunate *Captain* went down; but when that ship sunk did the First Lord of the Admiralty take the responsibility upon his own shoulders of the loss of that vessel? No; neither the First Lord, nor the First Sea Lord, nor the Second Sea Lord, took the responsibility; but the First Lord wrote a Minute relating to the loss of the *Captain* in November, 1870, which seriously affected the reputation of Sir Spencer Robinson, the Controller of the Navy. The Select Committee on the Board of Admiralty in 1871 reported that—

"The combination of the two Offices of Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty and Controller placed him in an anomalous position, since he was at once a member of the Board and also serving under the Board. This arrangement has not been altogether successful."

The Minute of the right hon. Member for South Edinburgh in 1870 relating to the loss of the *Captain* was published without having been seen by the First Sea Lord or Sir Spencer Robinson. He called attention to the existence of this beautiful system which enabled the First Lord of the Admiralty to publish a Minute without having first shown it to the officer concerned or to the First Sea Lord, who were his primary Advisers, or, to speak more properly, his Colleagues. The Committee went on to remark in their Report—

"Such a proceeding is quite unprecedented; but it showed the great difficulty of exactly fixing the responsibility."

No doubt it did; but the same difficulty existed now as it did then.

Mr. CHILDERS: What is the date of that Committee?

Admiral MAYNE said, he was referring to the Report of the Committee of 1871 on the Board of Admiralty, which states that on the 30th of November, 1870, "Mr. Childers wrote a Minute relating to the loss of the *Captain.*"

Mr. CHILDERS: What was the nature of the Committee? I have read no Report of a Committee containing those words.

Admiral MAYNE said, it was not a Departmental, but a Select Committee.

Mr. CHILDERS: A Select Committee of which House, and upon what?

Admiral MAYNE said, he could not state at that moment from memory; but it was a Committee known as the Select Committee of 1871, and he should be happy to show the Report to the right hon. Gentleman privately. He was quite certain as to his quotations, although he might not be strictly accurate as to the date. The Report went on to say—

"The First Lord being himself nominally responsible for sending the ship—the *Captain*—to sea, constituted himself a judge of the case, and, exempting himself from all blame, distributed censure amongst a number of persons, while he placed the chief weight on the Controller, who had been by a former Board especially released from this responsibility. So, again, as to the responsibility of the other Lords. The division, *matériel* and *personnel*, appeared on a superficial view to be precise and easily understood. Almost every witness gave his opinion that the union of a seat on the Board with the Office of Controller had been a mistake."

Mr. CHILDERS: No such Report was ever made by a Select Committee.

The hon. and gallant Gentleman is entirely mistaken.

ADMIRAL MAYNE said, yet when that question arose respecting the building of a new class of frigate the First Sea Lord said he considered this a question for himself rather than for the Lord of the Admiralty who was Controller of the Admiralty, and that the fancies of the Controller need not be considered. That showed again the utterly mixed condition into which the Board of Admiralty had got as to responsibility. He had spoken of the appointment of the Controller of the Navy, and had stated that the appointment gave rise to some difference of opinion at the Board of Admiralty itself. In 1869, an Order in Council merged the control of the Navy into a Third Lord—

> "With the view of simplifying and facilitating the transaction of the business of the Department, and more effectually controlling the naval expenditure."

But, in 1872, another Order in Council re-established the Controller of the Navy as an office "to be held for a fixed period by an officer not a Member of the Board." In 1882, it was considered desirable that the Controller should again be appointed Naval Lord, and an additional Civil Lord should be appointed "who should possess sufficient mechanical and engineering knowledge, as well as administrative experience," to assist the Controller. He mentioned these things to show that there had been no continuity whatever in the policy of the Board of Admiralty, although he was aware that the noble Lord at the head had spoken, at Ealing, of the continuity of the Service being far better than that of the French Naval Service. During the 30 years following the last Lord High Admiral there had been no less than 103 changes in the Admiralty; consequently, the experience of the Lords of the Admiralty had averaged something like half a-year each. Since 1880, there had been three First Lords, seven Financial Secretaries, and 16 Lords. Taking an average, they would find that a First Lord with an average experience of two years, was financially advised by Secretaries with an average of one year experience, and in other matters by Lords of an average experience of six months. It was upon such limited experience as this that these officers undertook to prepare the Navy Estimates, and he would ask the House, or any man of experience, how it was possible to perform the work satisfactorily under a system like that? The noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty had himself condemned the system—as would be admitted by the House when he reminded them of the answer which the First Lord gave last year to the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) when he attacked the Admiralty. The First Lord on that occasion admitted that the whole system had been bad from beginning to end, until he came into Office with a Board against which he (Admiral Mayne) had nothing to say. He would, however, remind the House that if it had not been for this wonderfully able Board, with the business experience of which they had heard so much of the Financial Secretary; if it had not been for the Heaven-born administration of the First Sea Lord, and the great mastery of details possessed by the Second Lord, and the abilities of the recusant Lord who last addressed the House, the affairs of the Admiralty might still have remained in a state of chaos in which the First Lord stated he had found them. When the question was raised about the ships, they were told by the First Lord that the money had been badly spent; that the contracts for the ships had not been properly looked into; that the Administrative Department had not been properly managed; and that adequate details had not been given, and they were assured that for the first time in our naval history the details had been given. It was said that the Admiralty had been re-organized; but it had been re-organized time after time. Every First Lord who came into Office immediately declared that he was about to re-organize it, and that wonderful things were to be accomplished under his administration; so it had been from the first, and so it would be—unless the system was altered—to the end of the chapter. In 1861, Sir James Graham announced the reforms which were only commenced to be made last year. Sir James Graham, giving evidence before the Committee of 1861, said that all the details of the individual cost of every ship not only could be given to the House of Commons, but that the time had arrived when it was absolutely necessary that they should be so given. That was 25 years ago, and yet they were told that the reforms were only commenced last year. They were among the changes which the noble Lord the First Lord made so much of, and he thought, it showed that a system must be utterly rotten which could go on for 25 years and yet enable the present administration last year to take the first step in building ships according to the Estimates, and spending money with advantage to the State. More than that, some of the improvements and reforms which the First Lord claimed to have effected were entirely opposed to the opinions of former First Lords, and would probably be altered immediately if, by an unfortunate turn of the wheel of fortune, hon. Gentlemen opposite should again be placed at the head of the Department. The noble Lord claimed that he had inaugurated a system by which the Lords of the Admiralty were able to minute their objections to any particular decision of the Board. But when the Committee sat on the loss of the *Megæra*, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh was asked by Lord Lawrence if he approved of the system adopted by the Council of India. The right hon. Gentleman said he knew very little about it, whereupon Lord Lawrence explained it to him, and the right hon. Gentleman said that he took one fatal objection to the system. That objection was one for which the First Lord now took credit. Therefore the House might rest assured that this would be altered the moment the Board of Admiralty was changed, if the right hon. Gentleman came into Office again. The First Lord said that it was sheer nonsense to talk about supremacy of the permanent officials of the Admiralty; but in the name of common sense how could it be otherwise when the First Lord and the Financial Secretary and the Naval Lords were all liable to a clean sweep whenever a change of Government took place, and were replaced by others who could not possibly know anything of the business for several months at the least. In the inquiry into the loss of the *Megæra*, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh made this statement—

> "I said to Mr. Lushington this state of things ought to exist, that if the heads of the Office whose tenure depends upon considerations of political character were removed, you and your heads of branches ought to have such a grasp of the business that you can carry it on until the new heads of the Office are warm in their saddles."

How long it took to get warm in the saddle must, of course, depend a good deal on the pace at which they went; but evidently until that was so the permanent clerks must rule, and sometimes the Board again changed before they had had time to get warm in their saddles. Now, what had happened in the case of the present Board of Admiralty? A Naval Lord retired. Well, he had known 100 Naval Lords retire, but in this instance the First Lord considered it necessary to explain to his constituents why the noble and gallant Lord who had just addressed the House left Office, together with the differences which had existed between the noble and gallant Lord and himself. Surely, this fact showed the amount of confusion which existed in the Department. And while the noble Lord was telling one thing to his constituents at Ealing, the hon. Gentleman the Financial Adviser of the First Lord was giving quite another version to his constituents in another part of the Kingdom. The noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty evidently did not know the position of the Members of the Board of Admiralty, for in the same sentence he spoke of them as primary Advisers, Colleagues, and subordinates. The words of the noble Lord were—

> "The difference between the War Office and the Admiralty is, first, that the naval officers are my Colleagues and not Assistants; they act as my primary and not as secondary Advisers."

Further on, he says, speaking of the noble and gallant Lord the Member for East Marylebone (Lord Charles Beresford)—

> "If he had succeeded in forcing me to reverse my decision, not a shred of the authority of the head of the Department would have remained, and a precedent would have been established of the most mischievous character, that of the First Lord yielding to his naval subordinate on a financial question."

That naval subordinate was the noble and gallant Lord, a Member of the Board of Admiralty, and the primary Adviser of the First Lord. Consequently, they were told that the First Lord had a primary Adviser from whom he got as much advice as possible, but acted upon it as much or as little as he chose. It came to this, that so far as the position of primary Adviser to the First Lord was concerned, so long as there was an agreement between them, the primary Adviser was the First Lord's Colleague, but when they differed he became his subordinate. In his Ealing speech the First Lord had nothing but praise for his Board; but surely if it was competent for a First Lord to praise the acts of the Board, it was equally so for him to condemn them, and there was nothing except a sense of duty to prevent any other Naval Lord not a Member of this House from calling a meeting in Hyde Park in order to give his version of the mode in which the affairs of the Admiralty were conducted. The First Lord told the public that the present Controller of the Navy was so able and so capable that he had reduced the Dockyard expenditure by £200,000; but at the same time his financial Adviser was telling his audience at Ormskirk that naval officers were quite unfit to control large establishments. As to the capabilities of naval officers for such positions, he would remind the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury that within a few days they had been told by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) that he had selected a naval officer for the command of the largest gun factory in England. The hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Admiralty had also said that the Report of the French Budget Committee showed that it was owing to the fact of the French having a naval officer at the head of the Navy that they had overrun their Estimates—[Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: Hear, hear!]—and that he had been superseded by a Civilian. The noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty said "Hear, hear!" but did he know that for the last 20 years the French had had naval officers at the head of their Admiralty, except for somewhat under two years in all, and that Admiral Krantz was at this moment in that position? If it was due to this cause that the French had overrun their Estimates, how about our own Estimates? The *Benbow* cost £52,000, the *Edinburgh* £77,000, and the *Warspite* £71,000 above the original Estimates, and they were told that it was not until an entire novelty had been introduced into the Department by the present Administration that our ships were ever built within the Estimates. In his judgment, many things might be advantageously copied by us from the French. So far from blaming Admiral Aube, the French Budget Committee told them that they had the good fortune to meet with the greatest assistance from the administration of the Navy, Admiral Aube having, from the time of his taking office, appointed a Committee to prepare new regulations conducive to economy. The head of the Admiralty was perfectly willing to work with that Committee, and the plan had worked well. When Admiral Aube reduced the French Naval Establishments, what did he do? He induced the Committee to grant a considerable sum of money in order to prevent a cruel discharge of a large number of men in the winter. Indeed there are many things which were done in France which might be advantageously copied in this country. He had little further to do than to point out that it was most wrong to say that naval officers were invariably in favour of expenditure. What they wanted was to be governed under a proper and intelligible system, and that the money should be spent for the real benefit of the Navy and country. Under the present system officers in the Navy were, during a period of three, four or five years, almost invariably kept on shore waiting for command, while in that time they might otherwise be gaining experience for the benefit of the Service. Naval officers did not want useless expenditure; their wish was to see in the Navy a sufficient number of ships of the highest and most efficient class. He wished, in conclusion, to put to the House and the noble Lord this Question, which was the real test—Was our system economical, and did it supply us with a proper Navy? As to economy, our Admiralty Vote dealt with 62,000 men; the French Admiralty Vote dealt with 45,000 men and 25,000 Marines and Marine Artillerymen, or 65,000 men. We employed at the Admiralty, for the purpose of administering this force, 500 persons; the French Government employed 250 persons only, or exactly half that number. Again, the monetary difference was far greater, our Vote for these persons amounting last year to £211,000. But calling it £200,000, the amount of the French Estimate was

£51,000 only. This sum included everything properly attributable to the French Admiralty except the very slight difference between the full and extra pay of the French Admirals on the Council —3,000 francs each—and the result showed that our Board of Admiralty employed double the number of persons employed by the French, and that at four times the cost. He (Admiral Mayne) admitted that everything in England was most costly in the matter of salaries, from the Secretary of State downwards, but even allowing for this country a charge double that of the French, the English system still cost £100,000 a-year in this Department more than the French. Then with regard to efficiency he defied the First Lord of the Admiralty, notwithstanding the post-prandial declarations of the First Sea Lord at the Engineers' Dinner the other night, to say that the Board of Admiralty were unanimous or that the majority of the Board would say that we had enough ships, either building or on the programme. He (Admiral Mayne) did not believe that the majority of the Board would say that they agreed with the policy which the First Lord had put into his Statement—namely, that of not laying down any more ironclads in 1888-9. He did not say that he had authority to state that the majority of the Board did not agree with the noble Lord; but could the noble Lord assure the House that his naval advisers who signed the Estimates of last year—he had not had time to examine the Estimate of the present year—agreed with him? The point was that the country was paying four times as much as the French were paying, but they certainly had not got one-third more ships, which every naval officer allowed they ought to have. It was well known that the French had four or five ships half-built, which they could complete sooner than we could complete ours, which were not yet even designed, while, at the same time, shipbuilding in Russia was going forward. There was no naval officer who would come before a Commission and say that we had a sufficient number of ships for the defence of the Imperial interests. He must repeat that naval officers did not wish for unnecessary expenditure. The feelings of the Navy were never better described than by Nelson, when writing to Collingwood enclosing him the plan of fighting the battle of Trafalgar. He said—

> "You and I can have no petty jealousies; we have but one object in view, the annihilation of our enemies and to bring a glorious peace to England."

That was the object which he believed all naval officers at the present day had before them.

Amendment proposed,

> To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "the allocation of authority in the administrative system of the Admiralty requires entire reform."—(*Lord Charles Beresford.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): I think, Sir, it is due to my noble and gallant Friend (Lord Charles Beresford) that I should now intervene in the debate, and take notice of the observations which he made, as well as those of the hon. and gallant Gentleman (Admiral Mayne) who has just sat down. I must at the outset protest against one remark made by my noble Friend and several remarks made by the hon. and gallant Gentleman who has just spoken. They have no right to assume that the Admiralty is not actuated by motives as pure as their own. My noble Friend distinctly stated that if the other noble Lords did not resign, it was probably because they were not Members of Parliament, and my noble and gallant Friend and the last speaker have held up to ridicule the speech of the Senior Naval Lord (Admiral Acland Hood) made on Saturday last. They have pretended that there were certain Members of the Board who altogether differed from that speech and differed from my Memorandum.

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD: I never said anything of the kind.

ADMIRAL MAYNE: As to the wording of the Memorandum I have no authority for that. I said I defied the noble Lord to say they agreed that we had enough ships—the policy of not building more.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: The theory of my hon. Friends is that the First Lord of the Admiralty ought implicitly to rely on the advice of experts. When I asked for their authority for insinuating that the Naval Lords differ from me, my hon. and gallant Friend says he defies me to state that they agree with me. Well, they do agree. Every word of the Memorandum was sent to every Member of the Board who was responsible for any one Department, and it was because they agreed with me that I have laid it on the Table of this House. [Admiral MAYNE here made a remark.] I must object to its being intimated either by assertion or insinuation that there is a difference of opinion between the First Lord of the Admiralty and the experts on the Board which does not exist. I wish now to refer to the difference which arose between my noble and gallant Friend and myself as to the salaries of the Intelligence Department. The question is a very simple one. I have repeatedly explained it at great length, but I am afraid I must recapitulate it. Four Naval Lords in November, 1886, pressed strongly upon me the necessity of enlarging the existing Naval Intelligence Department and adding to it a mobilization side; and they stated to me that as the work was urgent the appointment of the officers ought to be made at once. I went and saw the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), and I got his assent to enlarging the establishment on the understanding that the numbers and the salaries of the Department so enlarged were subsequently to be subject to Treasury revision. That was the understanding, and on that understanding those officers were appointed, and the whole Board were consenting parties to that condition, and my noble and gallant Friend was one of the Members of the Board who consented. The salaries which were proposed by the Committee seemed to me to be high; but believing that the Naval Lords were unanimous and these salaries being strongly pressed upon me by the First Naval Lord, I sent them forward to the Treasury, somewhat contrary to my better judgment. It was never asserted that these salaries were necessary for insuring efficiency. My noble and gallant Friend did not assert it. They were based upon the *status* and comparative salaries of other officers of other Departments. The Treasury pressed for our arguments; the arguments that were put forward were demolished, as the Treasury pointed out that what should regulate the standard was not the comparative salaries of other officers, but the work that had to be done, and what was the amount necessary to get the best men to do it. They, moreover, pointed out to me—and it was an argument that came home to myself—that no revision and no reduction in any Department would be possible if those officers who came in afresh were to have their salaries fixed on the highest scale which existed. I looked most carefully into the matter, and gave to it, I believe, even more personal attention than my noble and gallant Friend did himself. I saw that the salaries which the Treasury proposed were almost identical with those that were enjoyed by the Intelligence Department at the War Office, and in every single instance they were considerably above the full pay that the officers would have received. Seeing, also, that the question at issue did affect the efficiency of the Department, that the controversy had gone on for nearly 10 months, that I had ascertained in the meantime that two Naval Lords did not adhere to the original salaries which had been fixed, but thought them too high, and, feeling as I did, that there could be no greater waste of time than by the prolongation of an inter-departmental dispute, I directed a letter to be written to the Treasury, and so anxious was I that every Naval Lord should know what I had done that before I sent it to the Treasury every Naval Lord saw it and initialed it. The noble and gallant Lord did not object to it, and that shows that he did not consider that the reduction would affect the permanent efficiency of the Department. I heard no more. The letter went to the Treasury. Six weeks afterwards my noble and gallant Friend sent in a Memorandum — written in the strongest Saxon at his command—telling me that unless I chose to reverse my decision he would resign.

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD: No; put the Memorandum on the Table, and let the House see the real truth.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: I should be glad to do whatever is consistent with the public interest; but whatever differences of opinion may arise on a point of this kind in a Department, obviously the Head of that Department must have some power at some time of settling the question, and if ever there was an instance in which a civilian head should exercise his authority it was surely on a matter of this sort. It was not a naval question, and if anybody at the Admiralty was competent to judge what was the salary that would command the pick of the talent available for these appointments, it was the First Lord of the Admiralty. [Mr. GOSCHEN: The First Naval Lord.] No, the First Lord of the Admiralty, because he has to make all appointments above a certain grade, both on shore and afloat; and although I regret that my noble and gallant Friend resigned on that ground, there have been since then two vacancies in that Department, and there is a probability shortly of a vacancy through the head of the Department going to sea. In every single instance where there had been a vacancy we have been able to get the very men we want, and there has never been a word of protest against the salary. The question is a small one in itself, although it raises a very large principle—namely, whether a Junior Naval Lord was on such a matter to dictate to the whole of the Board of Admiralty. I feel satisfied myself that if I had been in my noble and gallant Friend's position, and he had been in mine, he would have dealt with me in such a case in a much more summary fashion than I dealt with him. My noble and gallant Friend has, however, occupied the greater portion of his speech in raising a question with which, if the House will allow me, I should like to come to close quarters. I confess for myself that I feel very conscious of the anomaly that a civilian like myself should be at the head of the Board of Admiralty, where there are so many distinguished admirals who have served their country. But when it is suggested that a military or a naval officer should be at the head of the War Office or at the head of the Admiralty, I want the House to reflect just for a moment what that means. If the House and the country could get over the objections which I am about to state and were willing to try the system of having a Naval Lord at the head of the Admiralty, I would willingly resign my present Office to-morrow in favour of the First Naval Lord. But the most cherished principle of the Constitution of this country is that when a Member of this House accepts Office he ceases to be a Member of the House of Commons and has to be re-elected. If naval and military officers were to become the heads of the great spending Departments, you would lay down the rule that when they are placed at the head of the War Department or of the Admiralty they are to be *ipso facto* Members of the Legislature. Is that a principle to which this House would like to assent? Suppose it did assent to it; let us pursue the matter a little further. The hon. and gallant Gentleman who spoke second to-night (Admiral Mayne) alluded to the evidence that was given by very distinguished men before two Committees. Some of the ablest administrators which this country has produced gave important evidence on this matter. Among them were Sir James Graham and the late Duke of Somerset; and they were both examined at a time of life when they were not likely again to hold Office. Both Sir James Graham and the Duke of Somerset took this strong objection to the suggestion that I am now considering—namely, that it would result in introducing politics into the Navy without bringing additional naval experience to the Admiralty. Naval officers would have to be chosen as much or even more for their politics as for their professional qualifications. I am not sure that in France the presence of a military officer at the head of the War Department or of a naval officer at the head of the Admiralty is a source of stability to that country. My hon. and gallant Friend alluded to the French Estimates. In February last, in France, a most able Report was made by a Committee, and no charges such as those made against the administration of the French Navy had been made against the administration of the British Navy. There is an absolute concensus of opinion that the result of appointing a distinguished expert at the head of the French Admiralty has been such a rash expenditure incurred without sufficiently testing the objects upon which it was made as very seriously to jeopardize naval finance in France. Unless this House and the country are prepared to upset old political and Constitutional principles, there seems no possible remedy that can be applied, and it seems doubtful if any good would result. Now such being the case, you must have a Parliamentarian at the head of affairs. If you have a Parliamentarian he must have some control over his own Office. My noble and gallant Friend is very anxious that the opinions of the experts should be laid before Parliament, so that responsibility should be concentrated on those who advise the First Lord. My noble and gallant Friend had certain Departments under him at the Admiralty, and he made very few suggestions with reference to them; but he did make a large number of suggestions in regard to the Departments of the other Naval Lords, and he proposed to make great alterations in Departments for which he was not responsible. But if those Naval Lords are to be held responsible for their opinions, and if they object to many of the proposals of my noble and gallant Friend, why are those proposals to be forced upon them? Does it not come back to this, that my noble and gallant Friend—because he happens to be in the House of Commons—is in a position to criticize the proceedings and the management of the Departments of the Naval Lords who are experts; and does it not show that as long as there are in this House men who are entitled as having special knowledge to express opinions on naval matters they will criticize statements made in the Estimates whether they come from the experts or from the First Lord, and who is to defend the experts' opinions if attacked? My noble and gallant Friend alleges that in the Memorandum I issued I made statements that no seaman would make. I utterly traverse and contradict that statement. I say that every statement in that Memorandum was carefully discussed with the Naval Lord whose Department it concerned, and the two concluding statements contained in the paragraph he quoted—and to which he took special exception—were discussed perhaps more than any others. My noble and gallant Friend says that by the present system misleading documents may be laid before Parliament; and that I, as a civilian, have come to conclusions altogether fallacious as to the naval supremacy of this country. I do not know by what means you can test the relative superiority of this country as compared with other countries, except by taking the number of ships, the number of men, and the number of guns, and comparing them with the number of ships, the number of men, and the number of guns which those respective nations have. It may interest the House if I give my *data* for the statements I advanced; but if the House thinks we are too weak, and will press the Chancellor of the Exchequer to give additional sums of money to the Navy, I will endeavour to do my best to spend it judiciously. In the statement I am about to read, I exclude all the iron-clads anterior to the *Devastation*—which, in the opinion of naval experts, is a vessel worth re-fitting and re-engining—and include the Admiral and the belted Cruiser class. On March 1, 1887, the number of iron-clads was 16, with an aggregate tonnage of 127,000 tons. In addition to this there were five ships in reserve, with 44,000 tons, making in all a total of 171,000 tons. France, at the same time, had 10 ships in commission and six ships in reserve, with an aggregate of 119,000 tons; Italy had two ships in commission and two in reserve, with an aggregate of 41,000 tons; while Russia had one ship in commission and four in reserve, with an aggregate of 25,000 tons. That was how we stood on March 1, 1887; but during the past year—that is to say, the present financial year ending April 1—there have been added to the reserve 46,000 tons, as compared with 14,300 for France and 13,000 for Italy. Next year—carrying out the programme now before Parliament—we shall pass 53,000 tons, as compared with 29,000 for France, 32,000 for Italy, and 26,000 for Russia. In the following year we shall pass 39,000 tons, as against 20,000 tons for France, 13,000 for Italy, and 20,000 for Russia. And the result is that, whereas on March 1, 1887, we had 171,000 tons, as against 119,000 for France, 41,000 for Italy, and 26,000 for Russia, we shall have, as at April, 1890, 311,000 tons, as against 184,000 for France, 100,000 for Italy, and 73,000 for Russia. Therefore, we shall have during those years largely increased, and are still increasing, our lead. What our superiority as compared with other nations should be is a matter of dispute, but I am well within the mark when I say that we are from 30 to 40 per cent above the next most powerful naval power. That being the condition of things—and we can build much faster than any foreign country—I believe our relative superiority, as far as fighting power is concerned, is established, and that if we continue upon our programme we shall continue to make a greater advance in superiority. Then my noble and gallant Friend criticized the statement in which I remarked that—

> "When we consider the defence and protection which our commerce may require, extreme caution and reserve must be exercised,"

and that—

> "nothing but actual experience could justify any confident prediction as to how a thoroughly effective protection can be given by any fleet"

to our enormous Mercantile Marine. Will any single naval officer get up and answer how that can be done? I have the advantage as First Lord to come in contact with many distinguished officers going out to take commands and coming home; and I find the most extraordinary diversity of opinion as to how effective protection can be given to our enormous Mercantile Marine; and if that opinion does exist, why am I to be attacked for giving expression to it in the Memorandum? It is because there is this wide diversity of opinion that it is necessary to be careful at the present time. Then my noble Friend complains that we have not followed the French in the matter of melanite, which gave a remarkable exhibition of its power the other day in bursting in a gun, and blowing the gun to atoms. That it was a most sensitive explosive was proved by the recent fatal accident at Belfort.

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD said, he had complained that whilst the French had spent £1,000,000 on shells with high explosive bursting charges, we had not even made a trial with them.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: I know there is a rumour of £1,000,000 having been expended; but if these bursting charges of shells are to be fired from guns on board ships, it would be wiser to finish the ships first. As the French have not money enough to do the latter, I question whether they are spending any on the former. But even supposing that the Admiralty had been a little behindhand as regarded the introduction of a higher explosive, to whom was that due? In regard to expenditure of this character, so far as the Ordnance Department is concerned, my noble Friend is perfectly well aware experts are absolutely supreme; it is on their advice alone that action is taken, and it therefore seems strange that my noble Friend should find fault with us on the point. Wishes have been expressed that we should give greater authority to experts; but fault has been found because, on a question on which it would be right to be guided by the authority of experts, we have followed their lead. I believe that the principle for which the Seconder of the Motion contended is impossible. I admit that the system of civil control at the War Office and the Admiralty has been attempted to be carried on in this country for some years under almost impossible conditions. There has been an attempt, which has failed, at the War Office and partially at the Admiralty to make one branch of a Department responsible for economy and another for efficiency. I believe that to be a most baneful and unsatisfactory division; and I speak with a greater freedom because I think it has ceased to exist at the Admiralty; and the Secretary of State for War has, by the alterations he has made in Army organization, given far greater power and authority to military officers than they before possessed.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: Not financially.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: Yes, in this respect, that they are to have control over the expenditure that is voted for the one Department of which they are the head. I say that the division was an impossible one. I believe it is to the previous want of such a system that a great many of these admitted defects and shortcomings are due. Year after year the same thing has happened; Army and Navy Estimates have been laid before Parliament involving expenditure which ought to have been cut out, as not leading to efficiency, and reductions which were short-sighted and unwise, and which ought to have been kept in; and this was due, to a certain extent, to the length of time that Parliament sits. The matter stands thus—Estimates, as a whole, are prepared in November; but the shipbuilding programme of the Navy is probably not settled until after both the Army and the Navy Estimates are, to a certain extent, matured. Assume that the First Lord of the Admiralty, when the expenditure is submitted to him, says that it is too high, and that it is to be reduced; assume that when he submits it to the Cabinet he is told that the total must be still further reduced, and that the Navy expenditure must be brought within a certain limit; if he obeys such injunctions, what can the officers of the Admiralty do under the conditions? There are only a few weeks before the Estimates must be laid on the Table in due form. If it comes to a reduction, it is new expenditure that must be struck out. There may, perhaps, be a number of old items that could be struck out; but to strike them out comes in contact with personal interests, perhaps with local prejudices; and it is perfectly well known that any large reduction cannot be effected in the time available, so from year to year a considerable amount of new expenditure has been cut out of the Navy Estimates, because that has been the only means of reducing them, while a certain amount has been retained which might have been struck out if there had been more time for the revision of the Estimates. If you place Navy officers in a position in which they can combine for the purpose of promoting both efficiency and economy, I am confident there will be the greatest possible inducement to effect any economies which their experience can suggest. Our Estimates are considerably lower than those of last year; but I think the amount of work we shall be able to get out of those lower Estimates will make as good—I think I may almost say better—provision for the wants of the Navy than has been made for a good many years past. This is due to the fact that the Lords of the Admiralty and my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Admiralty have most scrupulously and rigorously overhauled during the past year the expenditure in every separate settled branch; and they have succeeded in cutting off a large amount of expenditure, without in any way affecting the amount of work to be done. If more authority is given to naval and and military experts, who to a large extent even now exercise authority at the Admiralty, I believe it is easy to reconcile the system of a civil headship of the Department, with the effective supervison and economical administration of expenditure. I sympathize a good deal with the criticisms which naval and military Friends make from year to year on the Estimates. They know that, under the system in force for some time past, we do not always get the best possible return for our money. If the Navy is to be made thoroughly efficient and to be able to cope with the demands of the future, we must be prepared, to a certain extent, to break with the past. As new wants are developed, and money is found to supply them, it is quite clear that old sources of expenditure, sanctioned by usage and tradition, but not required in modern days, must disappear. If naval and military Members of this House who possess special knowledge will give the Departments the benefit of their suggestions in that direction, they will strengthen the hands of the civil heads at the War Office and the Admiralty, because the mere fact of their recommending a reduction of expenditure which they view as unnecessary will make that reduction, when effected, far more valuable as well as palatable to the respective Services to which they belong. As to war organization I must differ with my noble Friend as to what he has stated in reference to the arrangements for adapting the Admiralty to the exigencies of a time of war. There is a most exhaustive Report at the Admiralty dealing with every single question that can arise in time of war. But little or no action had been taken upon it up to 1886. But a Naval Intelligence Department was established for collecting and piecing together scattered information; and, therefore, there is now, for the first time, a Department entrusted with the responsibility of seeing that everything that relates to the transition from a peace footing to a war footing is ready and in a proper condition. It would not be fair to those who have formerly held the Office of First Lord of the Admiralty to assume that this question had not been gravely considered and thought out. When my right hon. Friend the present First Lord of the Treasury was at the head of the Admiralty in 1878, and when we passed through a somewhat critical phase, arrangements were made by which we should, at very short notice, have been able to put the Fleet on a war footing. As to the suggestion that naval officers should be employed as clerks instead of civilians, there seems to be insuperable objections to it. Naval officers forget their work afloat if they are very long ashore; and if you take a number of naval officers away from their primary duty for a long time they will deteriorate as officers of the Navy. Then, should a war break out, you will require every naval officer you can lay your hands on, and at a critical juncture their places will have to be taken by those who do not know the work. The suggestion, therefore, although plausible, is not practicable. But there are certain branches into which retired paymasters and men in similar positions may be introduced. I admit that the expenditure inside the Admiralty is increasing yearly, and I am considering means by which to reduce it. But this brings you face to face with the question of pensions. All officials, not only at the Admiralty, but to a certain extent in the Dockyards, have a right to pensions; the State cannot break faith with them; and there is a great dislike, which I share, to running up non-effective charges. But you do not get rid of a non-effective charge by keeping men who do little work on salaries which increase every three years; on the contrary, when they retire their pensions are so much the higher. Then, again, if you bring naval assistants into the Admiralty, as my noble Friend suggests, what is to happen to the personal responsibility of heads of Departments? My noble Friend is also desirous that these naval assistants should be employed in drawing up instructions to Commanders-in-Chief afloat, and I think he referred to a sentiment which he said Admiral Hornby expressed—namely, that the Departments which drew up the orders were not able to understand what they were writing. I beg respectfully to traverse that statement, which, if true, would show a most mischievous state of things which ought at once to be remedied. The result of the suggestion of the noble Lord would mean that employing a number of junior naval officers at the Admiralty would be that they would either be superintending the operations of their seniors at the other end of the world during a campaign, or else at such a time would have to quit their civil functions and return to their ships. Then my noble Friend objects to the power which the First Lord has in speaking in the name of the Board. But the correspondence must be carried on in somebody's name; and where there is no Board it is carried on in the name of the head of the Department. Nineteen-twentieths of the letters which are written in the Admiralty never come to me. Every Naval Lord conducts his own correspondence in the name of the Board; and if no individual is to be able to speak in the name of the Board, every Naval Lord will have to conduct his correspondence in the name of the First Lord, the only result of which will be that Naval Lords will be placed in a worse position than they are now. I think I have now dealt with most of the questions to which my noble Friend alluded. The work which we have in hand we shall push on and develop as fast as we can. The time of the Admiralty Board has been much taken up in altering the form of the accounts which are presented to Parliament, which are now not alone valuable to Members of Parliament, who desire to cross-examine Ministers in respect of them, but are equally valuable as a like test in the hands of the Naval First Lord in reference to these particular Departments. I am glad to find, if I can judge from personal expression of opinion, that they met with the approval of the House. The accounts for the first time clearly distribute and allocate to every particular service the number of men and the expenditure associated with the pay of those men. I am fully satisfied that if this form of account is adopted in the future, it must tend year by year to a more and more economical and effective administration. The alteration entails an enormous mass of work, and nothing but the indomitable energy of my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Admiralty can have enabled him to overcome the almost superhuman obstacles which intervene between him and the accomplishment of his task. We attach great importance to accurate forms of account. We believe that by the steps we have thus taken, we shall insure continuity of policy and the continuous maintenance and strength of the Establishment. We have deliberately kept our programme well within our financial resources. Our difficulty, and I will be quite frank with the House, is not one of want of funds, or want of shipbuilding power; it is one of gun-producing power. The object which we have in view is to keep the non-effective expenditure of the Navy as small as possible, and to keep on an improved footing our organization for war, so "that every ship, either in commission or in reserve," shall have all its requirements thought out and prepared, so that the whole available force of the Navy may be ready and effective at any given moment that it may be required. We have endeavoured to associate with the Navy the most powerful of our Mercantile Fleet, and we believe that by this association of force being brought rapidly into operation we shall have time during which we can further develop and organize the untouched naval resources of the country. It is the policy of the Government to thoroughly equip and arm our coaling stations and our fortresses, and to co-operate with the Colonies in inducing them to fortify their forts and their stations, so that the whole effective force of the Navy may be ready to take an objective, and, if necessary, to assume an offensive attitude in whatever part of the world we may be required. We cannot pretend to have perfected our plan and settled all the questions relating to organization; but we have contrived to make very considerable progress in the matter, and I believe that the object which we have in view is now within a measurable distance. If I am not assenting to the course of my noble Friend, if I believe that a good many of his suggestions are impracticable—that they will come into collision with political usages and Constitutional traditions; on the other hand, the House can help the Government, and especially naval and military Members, and we ask them to co-operate with the Government. The Government believe that by referring these Estimates to a Select Committee we may make the Committee a repository of naval knowledge which may be most useful to First Lords of the Admiralty. The Government believe, moreover, that our Estimates give a large amount of information that was not formerly given to Members of Parliament; and if my noble Friend and those who think with him will co-operate with Her Majesty's Government on the lines I have mentioned, I believe we shall be able to secure a continuity of policy that will include the permanent maintenance both of establishment and stores and of those reserves which are essential to the efficiency of the Services, but, above all, to a Service like the Navy, upon the prompt and effective discharge of whose duties, in some unforeseen crisis, may depend the commercial interests and success of the Empire.

Mr. PENROSE FITZGERALD (Cambridge) said, he did not know what was the ultimate intention of this Resolution; but of one thing he was well satisfied—namely, that outside the professional circles which had been represented by the noble and gallant Lord the Member for East Marylebone (Lord Charles Beresford) and the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Pembroke and Haverfordwest (Admiral Mayne) there was in the country very great anxiety to ascertain whether the present naval armament of the country was or was not capable of doing that which was expected of it in time of war. He would like to put to the noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty a very practical question. He did not desire to split hairs as to whether the noble Lord could state, or could not state, that his Naval Colleagues were in accord with him; but would the noble Lord tell the House that in the opinion of his Colleagues the Navy of England was at the present time in a position to do that which the country expected of them in the event of war breaking out? He (Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald) was well aware of the enormous difficulties in the way of gauging the relative powers of the Navies of various countries. And there were many diverse opinions as to what the country would expect in the event of war, but upon one point he believed there was no such difference. The country and the House expected from the Navy that it would ensure the arrival of food supplies from beyond seas; that it would protect our coasts from invasion; and, further, that it would keep up the supply of raw material necessary to enable the artizans of this country to continue to earn their wages. That that was the opinion of the country he thought no one could gainsay. With regard to the question of coaling stations, hon. Members would be at least aware that most of our coaling stations were not places at which coal was found, but that they were stations to which we had to take coals for the purpose of supplying our ships.

MR. SPEAKER: I would remind the hon. Gentleman that there is a specific Amendment before the House. The remarks he now offers are more pertinent to the general question; they do not refer to the specific question of the administrative system of the Admiralty.

MR. PENROSE FITZGERALD said, he was on the point of coming to what the First Lord has said on this point.

MR. SPEAKER: I do not know what application that can have to the Amendment before the House.

MR. PENROSE FITZGERALD said, in that case he would defer his observations until the original question was before the House.

COMMANDER BETHELL (York, East Riding, Holderness) said, he scarcely thought that the First Lord of the Admiralty had exactly met the difficulty indicated by the noble Lord the Member for East Marylebone, and that had been shadowed forth by his hon. and gallant Friend. The question at the root of the difficulty was whether the First Lord ought to have in general policy a distinct arbitration over the remaining Members of the Board of Admiralty. His noble Friend who introduced the Motion was inclined to the opinion that there should be some umpire or arbitrator external to the Board, so that the Government might have an opportunity of ascertaining the opinions of experts. He (Commander Bethell) did not agree with his noble Friend in that matter. He was inclined to think with him that there should be some arbitrator or umpire to settle these matters; but he considered that the experts should be internal and not external to the Board itself. The Board of Admiralty was generally understood, by people who were not very conversant with it, to be an administrative Board; the general opinion was that on a question of policy the majority of the Board defined, ruled, and decided the question, but he was bound to say that in reality the First Lord had the power of deciding what policy should be pursued, whatever might be the opinion of the remaining Members of the Board. He submitted that there was no reason why the Board should not be constituted on the lines he had indicated, and that there should be power of resignation on the part of Members of the Board, and, on the other hand, power of dismissal of elected Members. In that way on any particular line of policy on which the First Lord was agreed, he would dismiss those Members of the Board with whom he disagreed; and rightly, for if that policy did not recommend itself to the country, he in his turn would lose his position, nor would that have the effect of lessening his responsibility in that House. There was no reason that he knew of why the noble Lord should not be in that House the exponent of the policy on which he had decided, nor was there any reason that a censure passed on the noble Lord should not cast a stigma on the whole of the Board. He did not agree with the proposal of the noble Lord, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should have the power of arbitrating on a particular question between the noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty and his Colleagues. He (Commander Bethell) suggested that hon. Members should look back over the last 20 years and see whether all that had been done by the Admiralty in that time had been successful. He admitted that the country had every confidence in the noble Lord and the present Board, but it was in the knowledge of everyone that in times past there had been at the head of the Admiralty men who, however clever they might have been, had held some strong opinions with regard to the Navy which were quite out of harmony with the opinions of those conversant with naval matters. Under those circumstances it would be undoubtedly possible to force a line of policy on the remainder of the Board which would not commend itself to the Navy or the nation in general. If, on the other hand, a Gentleman at the head of the Board holding strong opinions were controlled by the remaining Members of the Board, he was inclined to think that they would have a security in future, which they had not had in the past, from many mistakes in policy which had undoubtedly occurred; so that although he differed to some extent from the noble Lord who introduced this Motion, yet it would be seen that he was going in the same direction with himself. He and his Colleagues desired that there should be some means of arbitration or control in the Board of Admiralty; whereas his noble Friend was of opinion that those means of arbitration or control should be external to it. But whatever differences existed between the noble Lord and himself, they had arrived practically at the same conclusion, and he submitted to the First Lord that, however interesting his speech had been, he had not approached that part of the question which they as naval men felt to be the particular point in dispute.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question again proposed.

MR. PENROSE FITZGERALD (Cambridge) said, he had remarked, just before the Amendment of the noble Lord the Member for East Marylebone was negatived, that there was one plain straightforward question which he hoped the First Lord of the Admiralty would answer. Would the noble Lord tell the House of Commons that he and his Colleagues, including such men as the heads of the Intelligence Department and the Director of Naval Ordnance—Admiral Hornby, Admiral Hewitt, and so forth, were agreed that at the present moment the forces of England were such as the people of this country would expect them to be when a war broke out. If the noble Lord could make that statement, it would do much to allay the uneasy feeling which existed not only in naval and military circles, but also to a large extent throughout the country. The three things which the country certainly demanded were that the Fleet should be sufficient for the protection of our shores against invasion, for the adequate security of our food supplies, and for the protection of convoys of ships conveying raw materials to be manufactured by the artizans of this country. These he took to be the smallest duties expected by the House and the country to be performed by the Board of Admiralty. In old days convoys were protected by sailing ships, and the experience they had in navigating fleets when under sail, no doubt, added to the natural instinct of Englishmen, had made them better sailors. Although he did not, for one moment, say that the blue jackets, or rather the black jackets, of the Navy were one whit behind their predecessors, they would, however, have many great difficulties to deal with. It was formerly necessary sometimes to rig up jurymasts, or to do something to prevent a vessel from becoming a mere hulk upon the water. Now, unless our ships had coal they would be in a worse position than a dismasted sailing ship—perfectly helpless and unable to assist a convoy and prevent it falling an easy prey to the enemy, and he did not believe that even in the wildest flight of imagination, anyone in the future would be able to invent jury-coal, although he was quite aware that the noble Lord who introduced the Amendment had himself rigged up a jury-boiler under very difficult circumstances. The First Lord of the Admiralty had given them a calculation of his own, made in March, 1887, with regard to the Navies of England and France. Before the year 1860, it was possible to gauge the value of our Navy and the strength of our ships in a far easier manner than now, because, when a line-of-battle ship was spoken of, it meant a line-of-battle ship, and nothing else. He did not mean to say they were all equal; but that by giving the number of them which belonged to each Power a fairly near estimate could be made of the naval strength of other nations and of our own. Of course, beside that, there was the question of the nationality of the crews, and we could, no doubt, claim some superiority on that head. But the position was all changed, and the ships of the Navy were of such various designs that the wit of man could not possibly gauge their relative values. It was very difficult to get more than two or three naval experts to agree as to the qualities which should be possessed by ships of war in respect of defensive power, coaling power, engine power, manœuvring power, and so forth. There had been various methods of computing the relative strength of the English and other Navies. One authority put down tonnage displacement as the first thing to be considered; another, coal-carrying power; a third, thickness of armour, irrespective of extent; and a fourth, speed and horse-power. To show how difficult it was for an expert to gauge the relative values of these qualities, he would first take the question of displacement. If hon. Members would refer to *The Navy List* of the present year, they would find that there were certain vessels of the Royal Navy which had not been lengthened amidships, or by the stem or stern, and yet whose tonnage during the last three months had increased. That was a very remarkable fact, and he thought that it was one which required some explanation. If the explanation was that they could increase the power of the ships of the Navy by sinking them further in the water than was intended by the designers, he said that the people of this country would not be satisfied with that method of increasing the power of the British Navy. He knew that this had been advocated by an extremely able civilian in the Naval Reserve, who for a long time occupied a seat in that House, and who now sat in "another place." He (Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald) maintained that that was not a fair or just way of making a comparison between the Navy of England and the Navies of foreign countries, for by that means you might double the apparent strength of the Navy by sending it to the bottom. Whether the other modes of comparison with regard to speed, coaling power, &c., were better than that he knew not. The matter was one for the decision of experts. But he mentioned this to show how difficult it was for this country to be satisfied that its Navy could do in time of need what was required of it, without the information of experts on the subject, and unless the First Lord came down to the House and declared that with that opinion of the experts he was satisfied. If it was difficult to gauge the value of British ships, it was still more difficult to do so with regard to the ships of the Navies of Europe. It was generally considered by those who knew most on the subject that England, at the present time, stood first as regards naval power, France second, and very near to England, Italy third, and a good way behind, Russia fourth, Germany fifth, Austria sixth, Turkey last, and the other European countries nowhere. If that were correct, he would like to know in what way the relative values of the Navies of any two countries were measured, or how the relative value of any two ships was calculated. The calculation was that the English Navy was in the proportion of 100, while the Navies of other countries stood thus—France 90, Italy 50, Russia 45, Germany 40, and Austria 31. He asked how the relative values of the vessels forming those Navies were guaged. Ships of the *Benbow*, *Camperdown*, and *Collingwood* class required to be taken largely on faith by outsiders like himself. He thought he was right in saying with regard to this class of vessels, that a skilled authority had declared that, if these vessels which were only to have their sides protected, had their unarmoured ends shot away, although it was possible they might float, he absolutely declined to express an opinion as to which part would float uppermost.

SIR EDWARD REED (Cardiff): I said I did not think they would float at all.

MR. PENROSE FITZGERALD: That was the class of vessels by which the Navy had been increased, and it became all the more necessary on that account for the noble Lord to reply to the plain matter of fact question which he had put before him. Every country had sacrificed something in order to make some feature supreme. France had adopted great defensive power, having heavy guns mounted in ships with tremendous armour; she had sacrificed for enormous strength and weight, the coal-carrying power of her vessels. Italy, on the other hand, had sacrificed everything for speed, giving their vessels little protection, but high speed, and guns of great offensive power. England had adopted, as he gathered, the medium between what France and Italy had done; but there was one point with regard to England which did not so much enter into the calculations of other countries, and that was—the desperate handicapping of English ships with regard to the amount of coal-carrying power necessary for them. He thought he was right in saying that France allowed about 7 per cent of coal-carrying power to line-of-battle ships; but English naval officers averred that, having regard to the duties which would be expected of the English Fleet, 14 per cent of coal-carrying power was necessary at the very least to enable the Navy of this country to do its work in any future war. That is to say, we had to allow to our enemy in, say a ship of 10,000 tons, 700 tons, which he might take out in guns, armour plates, or torpedoes. English vessels would thus be greatly handicapped, for while for other countries it was of less importance, the tracts of ocean over which English vessels had to go made it necessary for them to have a larger coal-carrying power. If it was so difficult a subject for them to ascertain the relative fighting capacities of various countries in respect of their Navies, it pointed to the moral that they should allow a very large margin for possible failures. But the consequences of failure were not the same in all cases; to no other country would failure be of such desperate importance as to England. In other nations there were enormous Armies for their protection and for aggressive purposes; but England alone trusted to her Navy. The destruction of the Navy of France, Italy, or Germany, although inconvenient, would be to those countries no more than a small and temporary inconvenience, whereas the destruction of the Navy of England would be the downfall of the country, which, without her Navy, would be like a watch without the mainspring. She must stop short and suddenly in her career, as surely as an animal in whose veins the blood ceased to flow. She would be incapacitated, and unable to retain her position among the nations of the world. It was nothing short of madness that the House should consent to go on an hour longer without it being determined, once for all, by experts at the Admiralty, whether or not our Navy was sufficient to protect our coasts, and ensure the protection of the food supply from abroad and raw material for manufacturing purposes at home. He believed—and the House believed—and trusted that the British sailor of the future would not be inferior to the British sailor of the past. The superiority of the English as sailors in the old days was due to the fact that, being enormously superior in numbers to the enemy, they were enabled to keep the sea on all occasions, and, at the same time, keep the enemy's fleet in their ports. When a fleet was kept in port the seamen got no practice at sea in seamanship or gunnery, and hence one cause of our superiority in the last French War, when, while we blockaded the enemy's ports, we ourselves kept the sea, and gained experience and practice in respect of seamanship. Would it be possible for England to keep the sea and blockade the enemy's ports in the future as she had done in the past? One thing was perfectly certain—namely, that at the outbreak of the next war it would be necessary for England to take a definite and clear part, particularly with regard to the Mediterranean. If war were declared to-morrow, say with France, would the First Lord dare to take away from the Channel Squadron a single ship, and send it to the Mediterranean, or to any other part of the world where our Possessions or interests were attacked? Was the Mediterranean Fleet large enough to repel an enemy from Malta and Gibraltar, supposing no succour could be sent? If it were not, those two places must capitulate if they were attacked by a superior fleet, as we should not dare to detach a single vessel from the Channel Squadron; and no First Lord would be held guiltless if he did so. Besides this, in the event of a war such as he was considering, our Admirals would be sending from all parts of the world for supports. It was clear, in the first place, that Russia was steadily advancing on India of set purpose. It was perfectly clear also that if we desired to defend India, we could only do so by being in a position to attack Russia at some other point than Herat. That was to say, we must strike Russia somewhere else than at Herat if we wished to save Herat. If that were so, then the only means of striking such a blow at Russia was by European alliances; but was there any possibility of this country being taken into alliance by any other European Power? Was our Army or Navy of sufficient strength and usefulness to induce any European Power to enter into an alliance with us? He did not think so. If the state of things were otherwise —that was to say, if our Fleet was sufficiently strong for us to be of any use to other European Powers—he believed such alliances might be formed. He believed that all it would be necessary for this country to do in order to prove of essential service to a foreign ally would be to send a Fleet to the Baltic and another to the Mediterranean. Such fleets, it was estimated by competent authorities, would be worth 500,000 men to a central Power of Europe in the event of an alliance. As it was, however, we were not strong enough for any foreign Power to seek an alliance with us. We stood almost alone, and at the outbreak of war it would be necessary for this country to make up its mind to take one of the three proverbial courses. The first course would be to take our place again amongst the nations of Europe, and bear the burdens and reap the benefits of such a course, giving up the short-sighted policy of saying that we would fight only for English interests. What were English interests—where did they extend to? We heard sometimes that it would be better for us to stay at home and mind our own business; but where was our home? Did it not extend from Australia to Canada, from New Zealand to the Cape of Good Hope, from Gibraltar to India, from the British Channel right across both hemispheres? Was that not our home, and was it not our business to defend our home in every quarter of the globe? The first course, then, which this country could follow would be to take her place amongst the nations of Europe. The second course would be to declare boldly that England wanted no allies, and was prepared to fight by herself. In that case, it would be absolutely necessary to double our present Navy, and largely increase our Army, especially in India; then, if they liked, we might sit down and wait for Russia—Russia, perhaps, backed by France—whenever it was convenient for her to attack us. The only other course was one which would hardly commend itself to England—namely, to go drifting on, sacrificing our position in Europe bit by bit until some war panic came and frightened the country into building something like a sufficiently powerful Navy for the defence of our shores, The country had acted under the influence of panic before, and that, too, in quite recent years. If it had not been for the Penjdeh incident we should not have had the belted cruiser class of vessels. He trusted the first of the three courses to which he had referred would be the one to commend itself to the House. He believed it would be the least expensive. It would be much less likely to give rise to jealousy than the course of doubling our Navy and saying—"We will only fight for English interests." It would be no menace. It would be, in his opinion, the most straightforward and Imperial policy that England could carry out. At all events, nothing could be more unfortunate than that we should have to rely for the strengthening of our Navy upon war scares and panics, at which times we had to pay largely increased prices for our ships and warlike stores. Our experiences in our last war with France, to which some reference had been made, were extremely valuable, and should be borne in mind at this time. Some people wanted altogether to break with the past; but, to his mind, they should learn from the past what would be useful to them in the present. Was it not a fact that in the last French War our Fleet was nearly double that of France, although we had to defend a much smaller Empire than the one we now possessed? Was it not also a fact that though the English Navy was in those days double that of France and Spain put together, it was barely adequate to save our shores from invasion. At the commencement of the war in 1793 our Navy, as he had said, was certainly double that of France; at the peace of 1801 the proportion of the two Navies was as 6 to 1, and yet in the last year of that war we lost 3 per cent of our commerce, captured principally by French privateers, and that was a very remarkable thing when we came to compare the Navies of the two countries. Here was a still more striking circumstance. Between the commencement of the year 1793 and the end of the year 1795, when France alone was our enemy, we lost 3,000 vessels, or about 6 per cent of our whole Navy. Let the House remember these figures, and remember that our naval strength was double that of France. [An hon. MEMBER: Under sail.] Yes; but it would take proportionately quite as strong or even a stronger convoy of steam vessels of war to escort a convoy of steam merchantmen as it took sailing war ships to escort a fleet of merchantmen under sail in the old days. If what he had referred to had occurred when our Fleet was double as strong as that of its enemy at one time, and, at another time, six times as strong, he could enforce with some chance of success the question he had put to the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty. But he had another thing to say in reference to our last war with France. In 1805, we had three Fleets. Nelson had left Europe, and was hunting Villeneuve. He followed him to the West Indies, but never fell in with him. He hunted him back to Europe. When Villeneuve got back to Europe he fell in with Sir Robert Calder, who was in command of a second Fleet off Ushant, while, south of that squadron, was another in charge of Admiral Collingwood, of the Burlings at Lisbon. As it afterwards turned out, Nelson, who had succeeded in sailing up level with Villeneuve, but had never managed to get within sight of him, was in Gibraltar with his Fleet. And what happened? Villeneuve fought an action with Sir Robert Calder, who was subsequently tried by court-martial for not annihilating a fleet very nearly twice as strong as his own. At that very time, the country had two other Fleets for the protection of the Mediterranean, and the protection of our commerce. What chance were our Admirals going to have in the future, if they were to be dealt with like that unless we put them in as good a position in regard to ships and guns as our Admirals were in in former times? Well, he (Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald) thanked the House for having listened to him. There was just one point he desired to emphasize — he almost wished he had dealt with no other topic, so important did he conceive it to be. Would the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty—and he asked this with all respect, for he considered the noble Lord had done wonders already at the Admiralty, and he hoped he would continue in the same line—come down to the House, and tell the House, and through the House the people of the country, that the experts with him in office were satisfied that the present and prospective state of the Navy was such that it would be capable the moment a war broke out—if it should be at 9 o'clock to-morrow morning—of protecting our shores from invasion, and the lines of route by which raw material was brought for our artizans to work up, and food was necessary to be supplied to our people without which there would be a famine, the like of which, perhaps, was never seen? Would the noble Lord say that was the opinion of the experts? If he did not, it should be the signal for the breaking out of the people into a necessary and wise panic. They would be justified in viewing the present condition of things with alarm, and in demanding from the Government an answer to such a question.

MR. R. W. DUFF (Banffshire) said, he rose to offer a few comments on the very able statement of the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty. But before he did so, he wished to say that when he remembered the brilliant services of the noble Lord the Member for East Marylebone (Lord Charles Beresford), he could not help regretting that those services were no longer at the command of the Admiralty. It was always desirable to have at the Admiralty young officers who had themselves seen service; and that was particularly the case when the Navy was daily being revolutionized by science. It was not for him to say whether the noble Lord was justified or not in doing as he had; but he (Mr. Duff) had no doubt, however, that in resigning his noble Friend had acted purely from patriotic motives; and he would have left the question there but for some observations made by his noble Friend, which appeared to reflect not only upon the present First Lord, but upon his Predecessors. The noble Lord had told them that when he went to the Admiralty he found to his utter astonishment that there was not a single shred or shadow of organization for war purposes. [Lord CHARLES BERESFORD: Hear, hear!] That was a very extreme statement, and one which reflected upon all who had been at the Admiralty; and he did not think that statement was justified by fact. The noble Lord said that the first thing he did, being a man of business, was to ask for the Papers bearing on the subject. He (Mr. Duff) also when he went to the Admiralty, as a man of business, asked for the Papers containing information on that point, and he was shown a set of Papers —he was not going to reveal confidential documents—which he did not think his noble Friend could have read. These Papers contained a complete organization for calling out the Coastguard and the Naval Reserves; and, so far from there not being a shred of organization for war purposes, he believed they could have called out the First Class Reserve in four days. That, at all events, was the opinion of his naval Colleagues. The noble Lord had stated that the Commanders-in-Chief of naval stations had had no information given to them of the number, character, and position of the foreign men-of-war on their respective stations. That statement was altogether inaccurate, because he (Mr. Duff) could positively assert that when he was in Office every Commander-in-Chief at every naval station had the fullest information supplied to him with regard to every foreign man-of-war, with their respective guns and men that were under their command on the station. If the noble Lord's statement were true, every First Lord of the Admiralty in recent years ought to have been impeached, and every Naval Lord cashiered. No doubt the intention of the noble Lord in making these statements was all that could be desired; nevertheless, it was certain that he had permitted his zeal to carry him too far. The noble Lord had done good service at the Admiralty; but any one who had listened to the noble Lord's speech would be led to believe that no one else had ever effected any reforms at the Admiralty. Now he came to the speech of the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty. The noble Lord had doubtless made many useful suggestions; but he had not given them any practical plan for the reorganization of the Board of Admiralty. With many of the suggestions which the noble Lord had made, however, he (Mr. Duff) entirely agreed. For instance, he quite agreed that the Admiralty were in the habit of withholding information that might very properly be given to that House. Thus, in one case, the Admiralty had withheld the Report of a Committee appointed to consider the question of providing coal for our coaling stations. From what he had gathered from the speech of the noble Lord opposite (Lord Charles Beresford), he understood that the noble Lord had no objection to the First Lord of the Admiralty being supreme, provided he never used his own head, but always adopted the suggestions of the Naval Lords. A great deal, it was true, might be said against the theoretical working of the Admiralty; but he believed it worked well in this way, that no man who had intelligence to become a Cabinet Minister would be so intensely foolish as to go and interfere with his naval Advisers in technical matters; but, at the same time, it would not do for him, under our present Parliamentary system, to inform his Cabinet that they could not take a particular course on Imperial questions, because the Naval Lords had raised objections to it. In matters of Imperial concern, therefore, the First Lord must necessarily be supreme. The noble Lord opposite had claimed the credit of having created the Intelligence Department of the Navy; but if the noble Lord would refer to the Navy Estimates for 1886, he would find that the sum of £2,000 was put down for the expenses of that Department, which was then under the same officers as it was now. He did not desire to deprive the noble Lord of the credit of having greatly extended the operations of that Department; but, as a matter of fact, the Department was a considerable one 25 years ago. On the other hand, he freely admitted that whereas, at one time, it would have taken four or five days to have got out our First Reserve, it could now be done in 48 hours. The noble Lord the present First Lord of the Admiralty deserved the thanks of the House for the new form in which he had brought out the Estimates, which was a great improvement upon the old form. He did not, however, think that the remark which the noble Lord had made at the conclusion of his speech—that the country had no cause of complaint with regard to our ships, men, and guns, was borne out by the statements he himself had made in the course of his speech. No doubt, the noble Lord's statements with regard to ships and men were sufficiently accurate; but the noble Lord himself had said that there had been considerable delay in the delivery of guns for the Navy, the result of which was that many iron-clads were awaiting their armaments. He would, moreover, take the case of the *Collingwood.* After the accident to the guns on board that vessel, new guns were ordered to be placed on board her in May, 1886, and the War Office promised to supply her with new guns in October of that year. Would the House believe that guns of the same pattern as those which had burst some time ago were still on board that ship? He could not help asking the question, whether, in the comparison which had been made between our Navy and that of France, the *Collingwood*, which dare not fire one of her guns, had been included as forming part of the defensive force of the British Navy? The fact that we could not get new guns supplied in 15 months would be a very alarming one in the event of our going to war. He wished to know what was the exact position of the New Naval Ordnance Department? He had ascertained, by a Question which he had put to the Surveyor General of the Ordnance last year, that out of 22 new guns which had been ordered to be supplied during the 12 months, only 10 had been delivered. With regard to the conditions upon which we were to obtain our naval ordnance in the future, he should like to know whether the Admiralty were to be at liberty to go into the open market, and obtain them were they thought fit? He understood from the noble Lord, the First Lord, that one of the chief difficulties in the way of that plan being adopted was that of ascertaining the various amount of stock which was held by the Naval and Military Departments; but in his opinion the interests of the country ought not to be allowed to suffer in a matter of such supreme importance as the arming of our ships by reason of a financial question having arisen between the War Office and the Admiralty. He could not understand why the Admiralty should not go into the open market and get their guns as Foreign Governments did. They should follow the example of France in that respect, and do all they could to encourage private firms. With regard to the Ordnance Department, he did not like the divided responsibility. Admiral Hoskins, in his evidence before the Royal Commission, said that the only good plan was to have the supply of guns for the two Services separately provided. If the Admiralty had the courage to adopt that policy, he thought that naval ordnance would be placed upon a more satisfactory footing. He questioned very much the policy of putting these enormous 110-ton guns on board our ships, especially in view of the great development that had taken place in recent years in quick-firing guns. There were two of these guns on the *Benbow;* each of them cost £20,000 without the fittings, and the cost of each shot was £190, while the gun only fired once in 10 minutes. He could not find anybody who was in favour of these guns, and the evidence given before the Commission was to the effect that the result was hardly equal to the expenditure. He hoped the Admiralty would reconsider the determination to put these guns on board other vessels. He quite admitted that the present Board of Admiralty were not responsible for the guns; but he would point out that since the ships that were to receive them were designed, some five years ago, there had been, as he said, a remarkable development in quick-firing guns, and the position was now somewhat altered. He understood that the Admiralty had sufficient gunpowder to enable them to fire 15 rounds of the *Benbow* guns, and he congratulated them upon that fact. They were very much in want of guns for the land forts, and he suggested that the 110-guns should be used in that direction. If he might make a general criticism upon the Estimates, he would say that in his opinion the noble Lord had taken too much money for ships and not enough for guns. At the present moment they were ahead of their shipbuilding programme and very much behind with guns. Under those circumstances, he urged that they might very well postpone some of the vessels which they intended to build by contract, and employ the money in getting more guns. Then, with regard to ammunition, Admiral Hoskins stated to the Commission that they ought to have 85 service rounds for each gun and 150 rounds in reserve. Instead of that, the Admiral said they had not got a half of 85, and there were none whatever in reserve. It was no use spending money on ships if they had no guns and no ammunition. He hoped that serious attention would be given to this matter. In the First Lord's Memorandum he referred to the Council of Education. He (Mr. Duff) would like to ask the noble Lord whether the Admiralty intended to give effect to the recommendations of the Committee? In his Memorandum the First Lord of the Admiralty referred to the provision for coaling at home and foreign stations. He (Mr. Duff) failed to find in the Estimates, however, any provision for carrying out the reccommendations of the Committee. They ought not to entirely neglect this subject. He entirely approved the policy of the Admiralty in recognizing the claims of lieutenants, because he thought the position of those officers was a very hard one.

SIR JOHN COMMERELL (Southampton) said, there were one or two points on which he should like to say a word or two in regard to the present organization of the Board of Admiralty. He did not agree with everything his noble and gallant Friend the Member for East Marylebone (Lord Charles Beresford) had said; but there were one or two points upon which he did agree with the noble and gallant Lord. As to the organization of the Board of Admiralty, he (Sir John Commerell) was one of those who believed he was expressing the opinion of a large body of naval officers when he said he was certainly against a naval officer being First Lord of the Admiralty. They wished to see the First Lord in his proper place, and they wished to see him a Cabinet Minister. At the same time, he believed that the Civil Department had an idea that naval officers as a body were opposed to the influence which they exercised at the Admiralty. He could assure the House that that was not the case. What they desired to see was that the First Lord should be thoroughly strengthened in his position, and holding unquestionably supreme power at the Admiralty. At the same time they desired that the opinion of the experts and Naval Lords should be taken, and, when taken, should be properly recorded. Now, so far as the Naval Lords were concerned, there was one great defect in the present system—and it applied to almost the whole Board. The great defect was that the Naval Lords were constantly going in and out. Since 1880 they had had four First Lords, one of them—the present First Lord—having been twice in Office, and, therefore, being counted as two. They had had 14 Sea Lords during that time, and seven Financial Secretaries. He certainly hoped that in any reorganization that might take place, so far as Naval Lords was concerned, there would be no question of politics brought to bear. It would be far better that the Naval Lords should be appointed for a certain time. He would not say for too long a time. He thought four years would be quite long enough. They should come in fresh from sea, and the system—which, he was sorry to say, had been too much practised in the past — of changing them from one home employment to another, should not be continued. What they wanted were naval officers fresh from sea — fresh from naval experience, and he was perfectly certain that some time in the future the system he advocated would be adopted. The naval officers did not for a single moment wish to interfere with questions of finance. They did not for a moment doubt the responsibility of the House. There was no doubt in the world that the House must have complete control more especially over the financial questions. But he would ask, could the finances at the Admiralty be conducted properly if they had seven Financial Secretaries in five years? Each of them, he had no doubt, came into Office with the most natural and laudable idea that he was "the only Joe," that he was the only man who ever knew anything about the subjects dealt with by the Departments, and that before he came in everything had been altogether wrong. He had no doubt that if he were to become Financial Secretary he should think exactly the same. The hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Forwood) had been rather hard on naval officers the other day. He (Sir John Commerell) said it without the slightest ill-nature, but it certainly seemed to him that the hon. Member must have been reading Captain Marryat's novels, and that "the fool of the family" had had something to do with bringing the hon. Member to his present views in reference to the Navy. Matters had very greatly altered since the old days. The House might depend on it that naval officers from the earliest period of education were brought up to take command of large bodies of men. They were taught from the earliest days that discipline was the great thing, and it was their duty—a duty he believed they were perfectly capable of discharging—to teach discipline to those under them. Naval officers did not, as he had said, wish to interfere in the financial part of the business. They left that to the House of Commons and the Financial Secretary, and he had no hesitation in saying that under the present First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) they had quite as much naval control as they ought to have; but they desired to guard the question for the future. He (Sir John Commerell) must say he looked on the Intelligence Department with a good deal of favour, although he thought the name altogether a misnomer. He thought they ought also to have joined with it the term "mobilization," because that was the first great point to which the Intelligence Department had to turn. No doubt, in time of war the Intelligence Department should communicate as rapidly as possible with the officers commanding stations; but he had no hesitation in saying that if he were Commander-in-Chief on any station when a war broke out he should carry out his own line of conduct even at the risk of his commission, so long as he believed it was for the benefit of the country. They must not think that in the future they were going to carry out wars from the end of a telegraph wire. If they thought that they would be making the greatest mistake; but he hoped no such thing would be aimed at by the Intelligence Department. The noble Lord the Member for East Marylebone (Lord Charles Beresford), when he stated that the Intelligence Department had not had a certain amount of influence in the past, was in error; but, at the same time, he had no hesitation in saying that he thought it had been very much improved. Two and a-half years ago, when he was Commander-in-Chief of the North American and West Indian Stations, when the Russian scare took place, as no plan of campaign had been communicated to him, he should have been left, to a considerable extent, to his own resources, and he should not have been sorry for it. When Commanders-in-Chief had received all the information which could be given to them, it was much better to leave the charge in their own hands. Officers had no right to be placed in command of stations if they could not be trusted, and when they trusted officers let them be truly trusted. There was one point on which he might congratulate the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen). He had no doubt that, after the speech of the noble Lord to-night, they would be remarking a notice in the paper declaring that the Chancellor of the Exchequer acknowledged from some unknown donor £2,000 conscience money. He had been a Junior Naval Lord for some time, and he must say he found he had enough to do from half-past 10 o'clock in the morning until half-past 5 o'clock or 6 o'clock in the evening. Much of it was work which he did not very much care for, as it embraced too many small matters of detail and too much minutiæ, such as the settlement of small sums of money, things which it would have been much better not to have been left to the Naval Lords of the Admiralty. Their time, he maintained, would have been much better employed in going into larger questions of shipbuilding and armaments, which were the subjects naval officers who had attained a certain position should be called upon to deal with. Such work as was at present given to the Naval Lords prevented them doing that sort of work which they ought to do. He had much pleasure in congratulating the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty on the programme he had laid down, with one exception. He regretted to see that the noble Lord did not propose to lay down any more iron-clads. No doubt, it was easy to compare the Navies of the different Powers; but the question was as to the enormous amount of work we should have to do in the future as compared with the French or any other Navy. When note was taken of our Colonies, our enormous trade, our geographical position, and, above all, the Suez Canal, he thought it was perhaps an unfortunate thing that the First Lord had not determined to lay down, say, two more iron-clads. For himself, he had been always very strongly of opinion that we had not a sufficient number of fast, powerful cruisers; but he thought that now, in place of one or two fast cruisers and three or four small vessels, a commencement might have been made with one or two iron-clads other than the *Nile* and *Trafalgar*. We ought to take into consideration the number of iron-clads that were really passing out of use and which it was not worth while to repair, because they could never take their place in line of battle. The vessels which he alluded to as being out of the running were vessels of the *Swiftsure* class, which had never been perfectly good, which were excessively unstable without 200 or 300 tons of ballast in them, and which tumbled first to one side and then to the other, going by the name of "the naval wobble." They should remember that they had a quantity of these iron-clads which were of no use, and let them do their best to replace them as soon as possible. The rapidity with which vessels became obsolete showed that we ought to proceed with ships which were commenced and finish them as rapidly as possible, seeing that at the quickest it took no less than three years to finish one. For the reasons he had stated he should have been glad to have seen a couple of iron-clads laid down. And now to return to an old subject which had been dealt with once or twice already—namely, the question of the *Warspite.* He was sorry to see that that vessel had cost £632,000, which was an enormous sum when they compared it with the expenditure upon the *Nile* and *Trafalgar,* which were two of the most powerful vessels in the Navy, and when also they compared it with the *Hero.* Then, as to the vessels of the *Porpoise* class of which the Navy was to be provided with half-a-dozen. He did not agree with making a large number of the same class of vessel, for if a mistake were made it was repeated in all, and then all had to be altered. He believed a mistake had been made with the construction of the *Porpoise* to such an extent as to destroy one-half of her utility. With all her weights on board she would draw one foot seven inches more than was intended, and the result was that her lines had been altered. He was glad to see that an increase had been made in the pay of lieutenants; he was glad to see that this hard-working "silver coinage" of the Navy—as he might call it—had received attention at last. It was only just that something should be done for these men, considering the work they had to do and the number of years they had to serve in bad climates. When the House thought of the education these men had to pass through, and that only two out of nine could arrive at the rank of commanders, and of the early age at which they had to retire—in many cases almost broken-hearted—hon. Members would agree that it was necessary that something should be done for them. The change which had been made in the case of the lieutenants was one which would be received with gratitude; but still it was heartrending to see how many old officers there were without the slightest hope of advancement. He thought the list of lieutenants, however, was utterly inadequate to the requirements of the Service. If a war were to break out and we had to mobilize to-morrow, and we found it necessary to have one or two squadrons, such as that we had in the Channel, he did not know where we should get our lieutenants from. He was told that in time of war we should have to reduce a ship's complement of lieutenants from four to three, and from five to four. It certainly appeared to him an extraordinary thing that, at a time when calling upon their vessels to do four times as much work as ordinarily, they should go and reduce the complement of lieutenants, who were really the men who had to do the best part of the important work. He hoped the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty would take steps to increase the list of lieutenants, although he knew very well that it would not help lieutenants in the future, as in peace time there would be more men wanting employment and not getting it. It was the duty of Parliament, however, to consider the requirements of the Service, and place those immeasurably above those of a personal character.

SIR EDWARD REED (Cardiff) said, he did not think it was quite fair to the Government and to those who had only had the Navy Estimates in their hands for a few hours to attempt to discuss the Estimates to-night. He did not intend to discuss them, but desired to take the opportunity of making one or two observations. He thought that the present Board of Admiralty deserved a good deal at the hands of the House. In the first place, they had proved themselves the first Board of Admiralty that could everbe induced to perform the common-sense operation of going quickly on with the ships they commenced, and that was a business procedure which no Board ought to have been capable of neglecting, and which every Board had systematically neglected until 1885. He remembered very well that in 1874 Mr. Ward Hunt—who was then First Lord of the Admiralty—promised that during the term of Office of the then Conservative Government they would take care that they did not give the country ships upon paper. That Government held Office for six years—during part of which time the right hon. Gentleman the present First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) was the First Lord of the Admiralty—but during those six years they never completed a single iron-clad. He (Sir Edward Reed) did not think that Liberal Administrations had been very much better. For another thing he thought they owed a great debt of gratitude to this Board. In 1885, practically the present Board of Admiralty took in hand the question of improving the condition of Dockyard labour. Under the old system a gentleman at Whitehall—namely, the Chief Constructor—had the power of altering ships just as much as he pleased, and nobody was there to call him to account. The present Board, or, at any rate, the Board of which the noble Lord the present First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) and the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) were the heads, took that question in hand, and they did a very wise thing. They took the whole management of the Dockyards out of the hands of the Chief Constructor, and put it in the hands of a highly qualified officer—(Professor Elgar)—upon whose appointment he heartily congratulated the Government. In his opinion the present Board deserved great praise for yet another thing. During a long course of years the Controllers and Constructors of the Navy took it into their heads—it might seem a strange thing to say, but it was nevertheless true—that the right way of protecting a ship was to put the armour inside of her. For a long course of years they pursued the abominable and foolish practice of putting about two-thirds of the armour-plating devoted to the protection of ships inside the ships, where it could not possibly be any protection to a ship at all. When they came into Office this Board took upon themselves the responsibility of utterly condemning that foolish system, and of putting a stop to it, and it was within his knowlege that one, at any rate, of the advisers of the First Lord said, in 1885, through the then Controller and Constructor of the Navy, that the ships which they had been completing for years were a disgrace to the British Navy, and unfit to put beneath the feet of British seamen. Why did he mention this? He mentioned it because the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty—apparently with no indication that he was doing anything unusual or open to exception—stated to the House that the only way to measure our naval strength was to count the number of armoured ships and the guns we possessed. He (Sir Edward Reed) asked if it was to be tolerated for a single moment that Governments should build as armoured ships ships which positively had no armour at all above water? Fortunately the present Board was not responsible for the construction of any of these ships, and he was not making these observations in a hostile spirit to the Board at all. But there had been many indications in the country and in the House of what he had begun to discredit—namely, an anxiety about the naval strength of this country. There was certainly a disposition to appreciate our naval situation. Let him, therefore, point to the state of matters with regard to that class of vessels known as "belted cruisers," which had their armour wholly under the water when they had their coals on board. A very able and, he thought, an extremely interesting speech was made to-night by the hon. Member for Cambridge (Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald), and in that speech the hon. Gentleman suggested some very important considerations touching the coal supply of ships; but he (Sir Edward Reed) hardly thought he need say that the men-of-war, with the limited coal supply which we allowed to them, must be viewed from the point of sea-going condition. What the country wanted to know was, what was the state of our men-of-war when they left our ports? He remembered a distinguished Member of a former Board of Admiralty, who—and he had too great respect for him to mention his name—once said to him—

> "These ships are not armoured ships at all when they leave our ports with their coal on board, but they burn their coal out when they get to sea, and is it necessary they should be fit to fight directly they get out of our own ports?"

It did seem to him (Sir Edward Reed) a most extraordinary proposition that our ships, the ships of Great Britain, the ships upon which we depended, were not to be expected to be fit to fight when they left our own shores. Last Saturday he was in Calais, and one hour afterwards he was in Dover—that illustrated the distance apart of the two countries. It appeared to him that one of the fundamental propositions as to which no reasonable man ought to admit of a doubt in his mind was that our ships must be the most prepared when they left our own ports and went out into the British Channel. That was the very first thing required. Would the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty be good enough, either to-night or on some later occasion, to explain to the House how it was that he was able to stand up, and with all his responsibility upon him reckon in his calculation of the armoured ships of this country the seven belted cruisers which had not an ounce of armour at all above the water line, or within six inches of the water line when they had all their stores and coal on board? He could hardly see that there was any use in debating. If it be from any cause a matter of indifference whether an armoured ship had her armour wholly under water or not, why build armoured ships at all? He noticed that the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty stated, in response to a question which he (Sir Edward Reed) was perhaps rude enough to put to him during his speech, that this description of ship was included in those he was reckoning as iron-clads, and the noble Lord added that some Italian ships with side armour were also included. He (Sir Edward Reed) hoped that no one in the House would infer from the fact that the Italians had certain ships without the necessary armour that, therefore, it was a matter of indifference whether our ships had their armour under water or not. The Italians pursued a specific policy. Their probable enemy was France. France had a powerful Navy with which Italy could not hope to compete; and, therefore, she had to decide for herself by what means she could produce vessels which might give her, not the power of entering into close engagements with France, but of doing as much annoyance and injury as she possibly could to French vessels. And so Italy went to work and designed vessels which had for the period for which they were designed immense steam power and immense armaments. They confined themselves to as much protection from armour as would enable them to work the powerful guns on board, and to work their engines and boilers in comparative safety. There was not a shadow of doubt that the designer of these ships was perfectly well aware that he was not producing vessels such as were fit to take the discharge of any vessel's guns at close quarters. But was that our position? The very thing we had to do was to hold the entrance to the British Channel, and to do that we must lie there and be prepared to fight any enemy who might come against us; because to abandon the British Channel was to abandon the national life, and bring on this country a famine worse than had ever been known in the records of the world. He passed on to another class of vessels, and as he had ventured to ask the noble Lord to tell them how it happened he could count the so-called belted cruisers amongst armoured ships, so he should like to know how the noble Lord could reckon upon vessels of the *Admiral* class? He (Sir Edward Reed) was sorry to see that anyone who discussed this question laboured under the disadvantage of having a state of facts that were so extraordinary, that were so alarming, if accepted in a pure and simple character, that men's minds only turned from them and supposed there must be some explanation. Yet his right hon. Friend the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) was sitting by his side, and he very well remembered what had happened in his period of Office. He was afraid the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Eastbourne Division of Sussex (Admiral Field) was about to make an attack on his right hon. Friend the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) for his conduct as First Lord—was about to use him as an illustration of certain principles of Admiralty administration. Before he mentioned what occurred in the time of his right hon. Friend (Mr. Childers), he would desire to state what occurred in the days of the Duke of Somerset, because there was a great deal of talk now-a-days about a naval officer managing the Navy. In the first place, he (Sir Edward Reed) did not at all understand that the noble and gallant Lord the Member for East Marylebone (Lord Charles Beresford) proposed or desired that there should be substituted for the responsible Cabinet Minister, who was a politician as well as First Lord, a naval officer. What he understood the noble and gallant Lord to mean, and what he entirely agreed with, was that there should be a re-arrangement of business at the Admiralty, and that there should be such a re-arrangement that when the First Lord had occasion to act against the judgment of his professional advisers, the latter's views should be made known to the country. In that he (Sir Edward Reed) most entirely agreed with the noble and gallant Lord, but he should disagree with him if his proposition was to displace the First Lord of the Admiralty by a naval officer. This was what happened under the Duke of Somerset—and he commended the fact to the attention of the hon. and gallant Admiral below the Gangway opposite (Admiral Field), because it occurred before that change in the Administration which the hon. and gallant Admiral so deplored. There was a meeting of the Board of Admiralty, attended by the whole Board, including himself. The Controller of the Navy was not then a Member of the Board. The meeting was to consider whether Her Majesty's ship *Bellerophon* should be built. The Duke of Somerset heard all the opinions of the Naval Lords, and afterwards put a series of questions to them, and then came to the conclusion that the objections of the Naval Lords were not well founded; that the ship, if built, would necessarily be in a large measure successful, and that it was, on the whole, to the advantage of the country to build the ship. The Duke of Somerset decided entirely against the judgment of all his Naval Advisers except the Naval Controller. The Naval Secretary to the Admiralty was against the ship, but the ship was built, with the result that there was a saving to the country of £106,000 on that single vessel, and a like saving on every other vessel of the same type that was built. Then came the question of the American monitors, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) was the First Lord of the Admiralty who decided to build the first ship of the mastless type—namely, the *Devastation.* He was bound to say that with the exception of the Naval Controller, who was appointed by the First Lord as a Member of the Board—with the exception of the opinion of this gentleman the *Devastation*—a totally new type of ship, which had been since highly approved of—to a large extent was adopted by the then First Lord against the advice of his Naval Advisers. He (Sir Edward Reed) thought that he could show by other cases when there had been critical situations, and when an authoritative judgment was required, that if they had a political First Lord, who was a good man of business and a man of strong sense, he would certainly get all the opinions of his Naval Advisers, and would give them due weight; but it was often desirable in the public interest that such a man should decide against technical advice. He (Sir Edward Reed) wanted to say a little more about the state of the Navy, and he did it in no spirit hostile to the present Board of Admiralty. Of course, the time was now past when he had to fight an uphill battle in the House with respect to certain ships, because they now had in the Minutes of the noble Lord of last year the facts about these ships stated, and the only question upon which they were justified in calling the First Lord to account was, how it happened that he went on calling all these ships of the *Admiral* class ironclad ships, and comparing them with ships of other Navies, when he must know that they had no more armour out of water than was represented by the height of a book upon the Table, and that only for about a third of their length; and when he must know that the slightest inclination on one side imperilled the lives of the seamen and officers on board of these ships. It would be most disgraceful treachery to send men on board these ships into battle, because they were not armoured ships at all. He desired to know why it was that the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty took upon himself the responsibility of fathering these ships, and of not giving an inquiry concerning them? It was a most singular circumstance about these vessels that an Administration had never been found which had been willing to make any experiments for the purpose of testing them. There were now experiments made to discover whether steel or compound armour was the better, and the House would remember that in the case of vessels of the *Inflexible* type they were told they were to be made safe by cork. Did they not know that when they let water into cork it got sodden and ceased to perform the functions of cork? There was now a suggestion about cellulose, and that was the point at which they had arrived. When the First Lord told them there was no necessity to lay down more iron-clads, it became his duty to give them fuller information about those ships. In the case of the *Inflexible*, there were independent men on the other side of the House—and he was pleased to see there were now—who would not be silenced in their demand for an inquiry, and statistics about the vessels were got out. He asked the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty to take some steps to ascertain the stability of these vessels and their action when wounded. If the noble Lord would do that he would relieve himself of a great responsibility. The noble Lord was not responsible for the design, but he was responsible if he did not give the House full information. He (Sir Edward Reed) did not speak without some reason. He was told that if this country became engaged in a war and the Admiralty intended to send the *Admiral* class of ship into action technical objection would be taken, and the First Lord would be prevented sending any of them into battle by the objections of technical men in his own employment. What were the figures about these vessels? There were five ships of this class which cost the country £3,750,000; there were seven ships of the belted cruiser class, which had no armour at all above the water line, which cost £2,000,000; then there were the *Impérieuse* and the *Warspite*, which were in pretty much the same predicament, which cost another £1,000,000 sterling; and there were four other vessels which were as dangerous—he referred to the *Ajax* class. When the *Inflexible* controversy was raging he received letters from men inside the Admiralty, from draftsmen employed on the vessel, asking him to get an inquiry, because there were defects in the vessels making them dangerous. They had spent £9,000,000 sterling on a series of ships which if they went into battle would be lost almost as readily as if they had no armour, and would be only saved by their engines and boilers. So far as their stability and power to keep afloat when injured was concerned they were just as if they had no armour at all, and he objected, as an Englishman and a Member of that House, to the First Lord getting up and jeopardizing the interests of this country by counting these among the armoured ships of the Navy. The Navy did not believe in these ships, and he heard a former Naval Member of the Board of Admiralty say publicly—

"I quite agree with the objections that have been brought against these ships; and I am confident—I was a Member of the Board which ordered these ships—that no such ships would have been allowed if the Board had known of the coming in of the small quick-firing guns."

Mr. White had been quoted as saying that there was no disposition on the part of foreign Governments to use heavy guns. They did not need heavy guns to destroy vessels of the *Admiral* class; any gun was good enough to destroy them. He would like the House to consider that statement—with any limitations it pleased—and ask itself whether, under such circumstances, this country was safe? His right hon. Friend near him said the other evening that in France the Navy was as much complained about as was our own Navy. That was very true, and he must say that the position of this country would be very critical if it were not so. But the objections to the French Navy were not of that kind; they were founded on the slow progress of the ships, and that was the reason why they considered themselves weak. Those facts showed that some change in the allocation of the public duties—of some alteration in the performance of them—was very much needed. The hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Forwood) had shown considerable interest in these and other technical matters, but the position of the House was this—that it had nothing but what the First Lord gave it about those matters. There was nothing in the Minutes of this year about the vessels of the *Admiral* class, and if he asked the proper persons about them he supposed the reply would be that it was ancient history. He felt unequal to discussing in any degree the Estimates for the year. He did not like to say anything in favour of their arrangement until he had studied it. But he did think it was rather a strong thing for a Government—even such a one as this, strong in strength not its own—to give the House Estimates on Thursday night with the view of discussing them on Monday night. Why should not the noble Lord give them some knowledge about those ships? Why were they to be kept in ignorance? He was told that on the Board of Admiralty the anxiety about those ships was even greater than that he had expressed. The apprehension of the water getting into the unarmoured parts of the vessel and dashing about was very great indeed. Whatever were the defects of these vessels they were absolutely unnecessary, and might easily have been obviated. There had always been a wanton disposition to put the armour in the interior instead of outside. England was so safe with many of her principal ships with their armour under water, and with every facility for going to the bottom so soon as the enemy's light guns touched them, that the present Admiralty did not think it necessary to put down any more ironclads. But they were going to put down two belted cruisers, laid down for no better reason than that they were part of the programme put before the United Service Institution by himself. He proposed, however, that these vessels should be of 7,000 tons, and steam 20 knots with a belt of armour. Instead of that the Admiralty made them of 5,000 tons, and of less speed, and so they had these ineffective and dangerous vessels. Now the Admiralty were going to lay down two cruisers of 9,000 tons, and to steam 20 knots; they were, however, refusing to make them belted cruisers; the armour was to be put inside. The system of putting armour inside was very dangerous in the sense that the vessels did not require to be much injured to be certain of capsizing. He desired to give the present Board all the support he could because it had done, and was doing, thoroughly good service. In conclusion, he would say that if he were right in his views, and if hundreds—he was going to say thousands—of naval officers who agreed with him were right, this country was in great danger in the event of a naval war; if they were wrong it ought to be in the power of somebody to show that they were wrong.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. FORWOOD) (Lancashire, Ormskirk) said, he thought the present Board of Admiralty had not a word to raise of objection to the tone that this debate had assumed. He thought the general character of the speeches made in reference to the propositions of the Board had been of a most friendly tone, and had left little for him to answer. The hon. Member for Cardiff (Sir Edward Reed) had devoted the principal part of his speech to animadverting on a class of ships known as the *Admiral* class. He (Mr. Forwood) had very little to say in reply to that, except that it was another evidence of the maxim that the doctors did often differ. These vessels of the *Admiral* class were laid down and constructed by the predecessors of the present Board, and he presumed that before the First Lord of that day accepted the design he had the Report of his Naval Colleagues and the naval designers at the Admiralty. He could not imagine that any person, be he layman or First Lord, would have laid down five or six cruisers of the belted class, unless he had been fully convinced by his Naval Colleagues and the designers as to the quality of the ships beforehand. There were competent naval officers who did maintain that those ships were powerful ships and useful ships. There were elements in their design intended to counteract the difficulties that might be encountered in the case of quick-firing guns above the water line. Those vessels had been built on the cellular principle, but no one could foretell the effect of the explosion of a shell inside. Again, he would say that those vessels were pronounced by competent naval authorities—he did not express an opinion himself—to be good, powerful ships, and at the recent naval manœuvres there were no ships which naval officers more preferred. This brought him to a point which was a little personal to this discussion. He had been twitted by several of his hon. and gallant Friends with regard to some remarks he had made as to experts. There was no one who had an higher opinion than himself of the Naval Service and of naval officers, but he had made some remarks in reference to the value to be set upon the opinion of experts, and he did so with the knowledge that men who were experts in any special department constantly differed largely from one another, and he could not better illustrate this than by referring to what they had heard in the course of the debate. The hon. Member for Cambridge (Mr. Penrose-Fitzgerald) had asked the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) whether he would state that our Navy was sufficient for the protection of our coasts, our food supply, and our supply of raw material in time of war. He (Mr. Forwood) ventured to think it would be a bold thing for a naval man or a civilian to say what extent of naval force was necessary to guard against all these contingencies; but this he would say—that the statements they had made were rather with regard to our position in relation to the force or combination of other nations. The information laid before the House by his noble Chief was information which he believed the House could thoroughly rely upon. It had been given on a careful analysis of the comparative strength of each vessel. From another Report which he himself had from Naval Authorities, he felt sure that the estimate of the relative proportion of the marine strength of England, as compared with other nations, fully confirmed the statement which the noble Lord had laid upon the Table of the House. The hon. Member for Cambridge had further confirmed the theory generally held as to the difficulty of getting experts to agree. The hon. Member said it was very difficult to get naval men to agree as to the relative values of armour, coaling, and manœuvring powers in the case of ships, and he (Mr. Forwood) felt that it would be very difficult to bring experts to hold any one opinion on those matters. They had to hear all sides of the case, and to determine on the course which they considered best for the country, to put it in a position to defend our ports and coasts. The hon. Member for Banffshire (Mr. Duff) had made some comments in reference to the coaling arrangements, particularly on the recommendation of the Coaling Committee with regard to Portland. He was not sorry to think that so little had been done with regard to Portland, for the money that had been spent had not been wisely expended. The coal shipping arrangements had been placed in a position at which vessels a great part of the year could not lie. The new hydraulic arrangements put up by Sir William Armstrong on the recommendation of the Committee were at such a part of the harbour as to be useless a great portion of the year. If that was a criterion of the value of the whole Report, he was of opinion that the House would be glad to hear that the Admiralty did not intend to spend much more money in this matter without a farther inquiry. Some inquiries were being made into the subject, and they hoped to prepare such plans this year for the coaling of vessels at Portland, and the other home stations, as would give satisfaction, and insure a proper supply of coal in times of emergency; but he could say that a large amount of money had been provided for barges, which were one of the best means for coaling vessels, as was shown by experience in the case of merchant vessels. Some 20 large barges and two steam barges were being built, capable each of carrying 150 tons of coal for home service, besides others in course of construction for our foreign stations. This, he thought, was an earnest of the desire of the present Board of Admiralty to improve the coaling arrangements for the Fleet. Then the hon. Member for Banffshire alluded to the question of the Board taking over the Armament Vote from the War Office, and he spoke of the divided responsibility. He (Mr. Forwood) would point out to the House what was the exact position of the Admiralty in regard to that Vote. They had not differed in the way which had been suggested with the War Office, as to the amount the Admiralty were to obtain from them on the transfer. They had simply asked the War Office to furnish the particulars of the stock and materials they had in hand—on shipboard and in reserve—so that they might form an opinion as to what it would be necessary to provide in future. The War Office were preparing a list of these things, and when the next Estimates were before the House the Admiralty would be better able to state to the House what it would be necessary to be done to place the reserves of ammunition in the position in which they ought to be. But he wished to say, with reference to the further remarks of the hon. Gentleman, in which he suggested that they ought to take more money for guns and less for ships, that they had taken as much for guns as the manufactories of the country could turn out, and in proof of that he might say that the War Office would have to return to the Treasury a very large amount of the money which they had taken for naval armaments this year, and which they had been unable to spend. It would be, therefore, idle on the part of the Admiralty to take an excessive amount, knowing the difficulty there had been in expending the money asked for last year. Then, with regard to the 110-ton gun which the hon. Member had referred to, he (Mr. Forwood) believed the feeling at the Admiralty was against building any more of that class of gun. But in the ships laid down for the guns, all the important mechanical and hydraulic gear was provided; the mountings were ready, and the guns were being constructed, and to pull the ships to pieces and to undo all the work that had been accomplished would, in his opinion, and also, he thought, in that of the House, would be to go back to the system of waste which had been going on for so long at the Admiralty. As to the remark of the hon. and gallant Member as to not building more iron-clads, the First Lord promised the House last year that no more iron-clads should be laid down until he had laid the particulars before the House. He would have the House bear in mind that they had still in hand a considerable amount of iron-clad vessels to finish, and he would find in the Estimates this year that they were practically going to renew the *Thunderer* and the *Superb*. The vessels were to have new engines, and were being re-armed, the effect of which would be practically to make them almost as good as two additional iron-clads to the Fleet. The First Lord never stated that the Board were going to cease building iron-clads, but said that they would not lay down any more until the House was taken into their confidence. It was impossible for the Admiralty to meet all the demands made every year. Their programme this year provided for a large amount of fast cruisers to protect the commerce and the food supplies of the people, to which the hon. Member for Cambridge had alluded. Having, as he believed, dealt with all the points raised by hon. Members, he expressed a hope that the House would consent to the Motion now before it, seeing that there would be an opportunity for general discussion of details when the Committee stage of the Estimates was reached.

Admiral FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) said, he hoped he should not put the responsible Ministers to any inconvenience by intruding upon the kind attention of the House for a short period. If it were the wish of the Minister in charge of the Estimates that the debate should be now adjourned, he (Admiral Field) would be only too delighted. If not, he would beg to call the attention of the House to a few remarks in the able speech of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), when he pointed out that there were 178 officers in the House connected with the Services. That remark had been received by derisive cheers from the other side of the House, and he (Admiral Field) knew what those derisive cheers meant. He wished to point out to those who had raised the derisive cheers that out of these 178 officers only seven were connected with the Navy. He would ask the attention of the House and its forbearance, reminding it that he had not spoken once this Session, though they had had a military debate for two nights, and that only one naval officer had taken part in it. Judging from the debate which took place the other night, the impression amongst military men seemed to be that the Army was the first defence of the country. He had always been of opinion, and was still, and would continue to be until he became fit for a lunatic asylum, that the Navy was the first line of defence of our Empire. The safety of the country depended upon the Navy, and not upon the Army, for, with all its merits, the Army could not go and fight a battle for the country unless it was carried to the scene of action by the Navy. Now, they had the Navy Estimates, or rather the Memorandum of the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton), laid before them, and they had had interesting speeches from both sides of the House, some of which he agreed with, and others with which he disagreed. He assumed that the Naval Lords approved of all that was in the Memorandum, though he should have liked to have been assured of this by seeing their names at the bottom of that Memorandum. He thought that the names of the Naval Lords should appear on these documents, although it seemed that the First Lord entertained a contrary view. He would discuss that matter with the noble Lord later on. The noble Lord, in his Memorandum, had at last done tardy justice to a most admirable class of men—namely, the lieutenants of the Royal Navy. He had done what most of them thought ought to have been done years ago—that was to say, he had raised the scale of pay of lieutenants of eight years' standing 2*s.* a-day, and the same amounts to lieutenants of 12 years' standing. But the Admiralty had given with one hand and taken away with the other; and in making these remarks it must be remembered that he was not only speaking his own sentiments, but those of the branch of the Service interested, as a deputation of very old lieutenants had done him the honour to wait upon him on this question. The lieutenants were grateful for the concession which had been made; but, as he pointed out, the Admiralty had given with one hand and taken away with the other. They had given this 2*s.* a-day to men of 12 years' standing, but had coupled with it a condition which it was almost impossible to fulfil—namely, six years' service in a ship of war at sea. If the noble Lord would remember that formerly, when the 2*s.* for lieutenants of 10 years' service required only three years in a ship of war at sea, he would find that that would work out about one year's service in a ship of war at sea for each three years' standing. It was now three years in a ship of war at sea for lieutenants of eight years' standing. It should be four years in a ship of war at sea for lieutenants of 12 years' standing to work out a fair proportion. He was told that there were no less than 30 lieutenants on the list who would be excluded from the benefits of the scheme of the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty. It was not the fault of these lieutenants that they had not been six years in a ship of war at sea; many had been kept on half-pay when promoted, or appointed to Coastguard ships against their will, which did not count as sea time. He would, therefore, ask the noble Lord to give careful attention to this matter. It was only a small matter; but it seemed only fair that the order should not be made retrospective. One word in reply to the hon. Member for Banffshire (Mr. Duff). He (Admiral Field) had great regard for the hon. Member's criticism, and liked to see Estimates criticized from the Opposition as well as from the Ministerial side of the House. The question of these Estimates was not a Party question; and he was, therefore, glad to see the Estimates discussed from a non-Party point of view. Well, the hon. Member had criticized the transfer of the Ordnance Vote from the Army to the Navy Estimates. It would be remembered that he (Admiral Field) had associated with others in order to force this policy on the Government in the Session of 1886. Fortunately, they had found the Government willing to be forced, and the transfer was carried out. It was rather hard for the hon. Member for Banffshire to criticize the change, for when he was in power with his Board of Admiralty, and with his own intense interest in the question, he did absolutely nothing.

Mr. R. W. DUFF said, he begged to acquaint the hon. and gallant Gentleman with the fact that the late Board of Admiralty, which was presided over by Lord Ripon, before it left Office prepared a Minute to the effect that the Admiralty ought in future to order their own guns, and ought to take over the whole responsibility of procuring the naval ordnance.

Admiral FIELD said, he did not care twopence about Minutes. He preferred action to Minutes. The hon. Gentleman knew that he (Admiral Field) had spoken to him upon this question, and had got him to assist hon. Members in this matter. He would know that in 1885 he (Admiral Field) spoke as a young Member on this question, but received no response; and it was all very well to talk about Minutes, but what was wanted was to see the Admiralty do the work. And now a word as to what had fallen from the hon. Member for Cardiff (Sir Edward Reed). The hon. Member advocated inquiry into the state of the Navy. He (Admiral Field) would deal with that later on. The hon. Member wanted further information, as did the House, and as they all did. The hon. Member spoke of ships which were dangerous for battle, and which cost £9,000,000 sterling. When a man of the reputation of the hon. Member spoke in that way—a man who had been Constructor of the Navy—his words required very serious attention, and those words might be used as an argument in favour of the proposed inquiry. He would now deal with the policy laid down in the noble Lord's Memorandum. As to the noble Lord's observations in that document, he said—

> "That owing to the exceptionally large outlay in the past three years it was possible to associate a reduction of expenditure with an increase of naval efficiency and strength."

It was a very funny thing to say that by a decrease of expenditure they could increase efficiency and strength, and he, therefore, wanted to know what the noble Lord's words meant? Did the noble Lord mean to tell them that he ignored the Vote of December, 1884, of £5,500,000 to be spent in five years, in addition to the ordinary Estimates—of which £3,100,000 were for new ships? He (Admiral Field) begged to tell the noble Lord, with all respect, that that Vote was not given to enable First Lords to reduce future Estimates. It was demanded by the country, and it was voted unanimously by the House, because past Administrations had not had the courage of their convictions. They knew what the Service required, but when they came to that House they did not ask for that amount which they knew was necessary to put the nation in a proper state of defence. It was only when the defences were reduced to a state of danger that this money was asked for and voted during the Russian scare; and now the noble Lord came down and told them that he was able to show a balance of £905,000, which, presumably, was to be handed over to the Treasury. He (Admiral Field) declared that he was not satisfied, and that no other naval man would be satisfied, to see this money handed over to the Treasury in reduction of expenditure. If the noble Lord had that balance it ought not to be paid back, but should be expended on more armoured cruisers—such as the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone (Lord Charles Beresford) had declared the Service required. All naval authorities agreed in the declaration that we wanted a large increase to our naval force in order to make the country safe. He knew it was always difficult in that House to advocate an increase in the expenditure; but naval men knew what they were talking about in these matters. He would quote some authorities on the subject. Admiral Sir Cooper Key, who had lately passed away, in a letter written by him to *The Times* on 3rd February last, said he was far from being satisfied with the condition of the Navy, either as regards *matériel, personnel,* or organization, but he believed it to be superior in all respects to any other Navy, and that it was improving year by year. That was the opinion of a high authority; but he (Admiral Field) did not believe that the measure of our requirements was the requirements of any other country. The measure of our requirements were our necessities—the enormous commerce we had to protect, our food supply, our Colonies, and so on. Sir Cooper Key went on to say that disaster might result if the unanimous opinion of the Naval Members of the Board of Admiralty was overruled. On this subject of the reduction of expenditure by £905,000, he (Admiral Field) maintained that the noble Lord did not prove his case, and the highest naval authorities in the country would have the House to pause before they accepted such a policy. Naval men ought to have their arguments heard in that House, although they might not be so powerful in it as out of it. Well, Admiral Hornby, Admiral Symonds, and Sir George Elliott, as well as other able men, were all of his view in this matter; and he only mentioned that in order to back up the hon. Member for Cardiff (Sir Edward Reed) and others, who had pointed out that the Navy was not up to the requirements of the Empire. If the noble Lord argued that we did not want any more belted cruisers or other ships built, how, in the name of common sense, could he justify his action in taking up merchant vessels and arming them? These ships might be valuable as auxiliaries in time of war, but they were not war vessels. They were simply egg-shells. Their engines were above the water-line, and a single shot from the enemy's cruisers would render them *hors de combat* if it struck them above the water-line. In one of the Secretary to the Admiralty's (Mr. Forwood's) able speeches—and the hon. Member made a good many speeches, some of them good and some of them bad, like that at Liverpool—he said we required £2,070,000 per annum to keep up the war strength of the Navy. If that were so, how was it possible that the sum of £905,000 could properly be paid back into the Treasury? The fact was an inquiry was required into all these matters. The Government had granted a kind of inquiry as to the system of organization, but he did not know what it meant. All that naval men wanted—and he believed soldiers wanted the same thing—was an inquiry as to whether or not our forces were sufficient for the country. If the statement of the hon.

Member for Cardiff were true, that ships which had cost £9,000,000 sterling were unfit to go into battle, a case was at once made out for inquiry as to the state of the Navy. He (Admiral Field) was going to call some powerful witnesses in support of that view, and the first witness he would take would be the Colonial Conference. If hon. Members would study the Report of that Conference, they would find a remarkable statement in the second Report of the Commission on Coaling Stations. They would find it laid down in the Appendix that the question as to how far the Navy was able to discharge the duties alluded to in the Report was one which could only be answered by comparing the strength of our Navy with that of foreign Navies, and with the estimate of the relative fighting power of each ship. That was a vital point. Our insular position had freed us from the necessity of competing in large standing armies with other nations; but the efforts other nations were making to increase their strength at sea, in the opinion of this authority, called for a corresponding effort on our part to increase the fighting power of our Navy. The Commission on Coaling Stations was deeply impressed with the evidence which had been produced, and expressed the opinion that, looking at the action of other countries, the fighting strength of our Navy should be increased with as little delay as possible. That was a very strong opinion to come from the Colonial Conference. Then the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), when speaking on the subject of expenditure, said that some people might think that we were spending too much money on the Navy and the Army. He (Admiral Field) would say nothing about the Army. Some people thought that we could do without one, but he was not one of those people. If we had a land frontier, we should require a much larger standing Army than we had, and might have a Conscription; but as we had only the water around us, what we wanted was a powerful Navy to protect our commerce and our food supplies. What he wanted to point out was that in the case of a war now-a-days, the Commander of a Fleet would have ten times greater anxiety than Commanders had had in the days of Nelson. In the days of Nelson an Admiral in command of a Squadron might be led away from the Channel in chase of an enemy for a long distance, and would have been able to do it without feeling that the supplies of the country might be cut off at a moment's notice, and the people left to starve. Naval men had to face that danger nowadays. Well, what did the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer say last year in the speech to which he (Admiral Field) alluded? He said—

> "He wished the House would make up its mind once for all how much it would spend on the Services; if expenditure was excessive, let it be reduced to what was absolutely indispensable for the defence of the country."

But how could they make up their minds on these questions unless they knew the facts? A powerful statement in support of a searching inquiry into the state of the Navy was made in a letter written by a right hon. Gentleman in 1884, and he (Admiral Field) did not know that the condition of things had very materially changed since that letter was written. The letter was dated the 23rd of September, 1884, and was written to *The Times*, and it referred to a Motion which had been made in the House by Admiral Sir John Hay, praying for an inquiry into the state of the Navy—and he (Admiral Field) might follow this up with the remark that the hon. Member for Cardiff had, from their own side of the House, pressed the Government to grant an inquiry into the state of the Navy. He (Admiral Field) had always blamed the hon. Gentleman for not pressing the matter home by a distinct Motion. In the letter to which he referred, the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "Early last Session Sir John Hay asked the Government to grant a Committee of the House to inquire into the state of the Navy and its inadequacy to protect the interests of this country in the event of sudden war with a Maritime Power. Although I insisted on the complete and sole responsibility of the Government of the day for the defensive forces of the Empire, I strongly urged upon them the expediency of granting the inquiry, as, notwithstanding the repeated assurances of the Admiralty, there was a sense of insecurity in the public mind which could only be allayed by a full and impartial—not necessarily a prolonged—examination of the facts by a body independent of present and of past Governments, but whose verdict would carry with it the confidence and the respect of the nation. The controversy has continued and has increased, and the feeling of alarm and insecurity has widened and deepened, but the Representatives of the Government evade

> the real issue, and satisfy themselves by piling figures upon figures in order to prove that they have at least done as well as those who preceded them in Office. This is not, I venture to think, a question about which the public at large care anything at all. They want to know whether our own shores and our Colonial Possessions are safe; whether we have a fighting Fleet which can dispose of any probable combination of forces which could be brought against it in battle; whether our food supplies, our trade, and our commerce are reasonably secure from interception by an enemy; whether, in point of fact, we are strong enough to make it in the highest degree improbable that an attack shall be made anywhere, and impossible that such an attack can be successful."

The writer was an ex-Cabinet Minister then, and he was a Cabinet Minister now.

> "These are questions which are being asked on all sides, and with increasing frequency. They are not Party questions, for they are being urged with the greatest vehemence by warm supporters of the Government, as well as by Liberal organs—notably by *The Pall Mall Gazette*."

It was now as then—

> "And unless they are dealt with exhaustively and immediately by such a Committee as I have indicated, disquiet and anxiety will increase and swell until some little incident will turn it into a panic."

It was only in 1884.

> "There is an impression gaining ground that our system of Government by Party is not conducive to good administration, and the thoughts and energies of our statesmen are devoted rather to the game of checkmating their opponents than to the less sensational but more anxious and laborious duties of administration; but if it comes to pass that the vital interests of the country are sacrificed to the paltry exigencies of Party warfare the demand for a radical change in our system will become irresistible. It will, perhaps, be said that this alarm is most mischievous, and may tend to bring about the very evil against which we wish to guard; but it is imbecility to suggest that Foreign Powers do not know the condition of our forces of every kind at least as well as every Minister of our own Government, with the exception, perhaps, of the Secretary of State for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty. If these Powers are our allies or our friends they will rejoice to see England awake to the duty of self-preservation, and if they are secretly hostile they will not be more disposed to attack us because we are placing ourselves in a condition of comparative security. Our neighbours take pains to acquaint themselves with the facts; our Ministers do not care to know more than is convenient on such a disagreeable subject." Will the Government give the inquiry when Parliament meets in October?"

He (Admiral Field) and his hon. and gallant Friends now asked if the Government would extend the scope of the inquiry which they had consented to grant?

> "It might be conducted by a Committee of the House of Commons or a Joint Committee of both Houses; but means must be found to satisfy the country that in these days of restless ambition our Navy is strong enough, or will forthwith be made strong enough, to protect it from aggression and to secure to the Empire of Great Britain peace and tranquillity."

Who was the writer of the letter? The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House—the First Lord of the Treasury. He (Admiral Field) did not think he could bring forward more powerful argument in support of naval opinion in favour of a searching inquiry into the state of our Navy. The letter he had quoted was written in the Autumn of 1884. The Conservative Government came into power in June, 1885. They were turned out in January, 1886. Naturally enough nothing was done in that short interval of time—between June and January, six months—and one could not judge them harshly for that. Another Ministry assumed Office in January, 1886, but Parties again changed places in the following August, so that nothing could be done in 1886. But the Government which took Office in August, 1886, had been in power through 1887 up to the present time, and now, when an application was made for a searching inquiry into the condition of the defences of the country—military and naval—the applicants were met from the Front Bench, not with approval, not with assent to a searching inquiry or an inquiry wanted by naval and military men; but with the offer of an inquiry into the system, or organization, whatever that might be. He asserted that the offer of the Government would not satisfy the feeling of the country as expressed to-night by the hon. Member for Cambridge (Mr. Penrose-Fitzgerald), the hon. Member for Cardiff (Sir Edward Reed), and by many others. The country wanted to know that it was safe and secure; it could not feel safe and secure unless it knew its naval power was so great and powerful that no combination of other Naval Powers—such as France and Russia for instance—could possibly overpower us, or interfere with our food supply or hamper our commerce. The First Lord of the Admiralty had said to-night he found a diversity of opinion amongst naval men—that he had never yet been able to ascertain that anyone had proposed an effective method of dealing with the great question of how protection was to be given. That only went to show the great need for a searching inquiry. If the noble Lord could not find men to agree as to what the nature of the defence or protection of our commerce or food supply should be—how many squadrons we required, and what cruisers we should have—he had made out a case for a searching inquiry. The measure of our requirements was our own necessity. Now he came to allude to the noble and gallant Lord the Member for East Marylebone (Lord Charles Beresford). He desired to express most sincerely his regret at the noble and gallant Lord's retirement. The noble and gallant Lord was a most valuable man at the Admiralty, because he was a Member of the House. Speaking for himself, he regretted they had no longer the connecting link between the House and the Admiralty which the noble and gallant Lord formed. He knew some persons argued that Naval Lords had no right to be Members of the House of Commons. He believed the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty shared that view. A very strong opinion against such a view was expressed by Sir James Graham in his evidence before the Duke of Somerset's Committee. As he (Admiral Field) had before said, owing to the noble and gallant Lord's resignation they had lost a valuable connecting link between Parliament and the Admiralty, and for that reason he regretted the resignation. He had no right to criticize the noble and gallant Lord's action; but he could not help saying he thought that in the interest of the Service the noble and gallant Lord made a great mistake in resigning, though, of course, he resigned for reasons highly honourable to himself. Now, he (Admiral Field) desired to allude to a remark or two made by the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty—in a speech he delivered at Ealing. He would not like to criticize unfavourably anything that he had said, because he was mindful that the noble Lord was compelled to speak to his constituents in reply to the noble and gallant Lord the Member for East Marylebone, and that probably he was led into saying things he would not otherwise have said about naval officers. He regretted that, although in some parts of his speech the First Lord of the Admiralty spoke in complimentary terms of his Naval Colleagues, in another part he spoke of them in a threatening tone. The noble Lord might not have meant to threaten; but he certainly did, for he indicated that if there was a difference of opinion the Naval Lords would have to go. It was quite unnecessary to make that threat. It was quite unnecessary for one in such a high position as the noble Lord to offer a word of caution on a public platform upon that question, and especially as the Naval Lords of the Admiralty could not possibly reply to it. Discipline alone would prevent them criticizing the action of the First Lord. Certainly it would have been better if the First Lord had not criticized beforehand the possible action of his Naval Colleagues. At the same time he thanked the noble Lord for the compliments he paid his Naval Colleagues, and he would set off those compliments against the adverse criticisms of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Forwood) at Liverpool. The First Lord, speaking of the Naval Lords, said—

> "The three great merits of the system are, first, by placing naval officers in positions of Executive responsibility as heads of departments, real power is conferred on them, and their habits and training specially and admirably qualify them for Executive administration."

But what did the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Admiralty say upon the point? He said—

> "From a business point of view, it would be most unwise to hand the control of the Services to Admirals or Generals, who were called experts. An expert was usually a dangerous man; he was generally imbued with some special idea of his own, which conscientiously he considered it his duty to push."

He (Admiral Field) supposed an expert was right in pushing his idea if his conscience prompted him to push it.

> "No two experts ever agreed upon a common plan, and in no profession, not even in the medical, was there greater divergence than among seamen and naval constructors as to the best type of war vessel."

So there was difference of opinion amongst architects. There was great difference of opinion in the House amongst politicians, and he did not think the Secretary to the Admiralty need be much surprised that naval men did not always agree upon nautical questions. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Forwood) went on to say—

> "The Service regarded the Admiral as the expert, and no doubt he was in regard to navigation, drill, naval tactics, and gunnery; but he had no opportunity of studying the technicalities of shipbuilding, nor could he on a quarter-deck become an adept in the control of huge manufacturing establishments employing 25,000 workmen or more."

Of course, he could not when he was kept afloat; but he would when he was put ashore. The hon. Gentleman went on—

> "The suggestion to hand over the Army and Navy to professional officers because they were supposed to be experts"—

no one even proposed it—it was the hon. Gentleman's heated imagination which led him to think so—

> "would fail to secure an effective Service or effective Parliamentary control."

No one even proposed it. The hon. Gentleman was raising up a phantom of his own creation to knock it down. The hon. Gentleman went on to say—

> "The present system worked well."

What a lot the hon. Gentleman knew about it—

> "Both State and Service had their due weight in administration."

That was the hon. Gentleman's opinion; it was not his (Admiral Field's) and his hon. Friends. Now he came to a delicious part of the hon. Gentleman's speech; it was really lovely. This hon. Gentleman, the Member for Ormskirk, the Secretary to the Admiralty, who certainly knew something about Steamship Companies and Steam Navigation Companies, expressed an opinion upon the French naval administration. He said—

> "France had tried an Admiral at the head of her Marine, and had just replaced him by a civilian."

Then he went on to give what he thought was the reason—

> "A reference to the Report of a Commission of Inquiry on the French Navy Estimates of 1887 did not show that an Admiral or expert was so very successful as an administrator that we ought to follow suit."

Well, that was complimentary to his (Admiral Field's) profession. Then the hon. Gentleman went on to say—

> "In the one year's work it was found that the estimates for vessels laid before the French Chambers were wrong to the extent of over 40 per cent — that ships represented to cost £2,800,000 had their estimated cost increased after investigation to £4,100,000."

The hon. Gentleman argued that a civilian had been appointed because the estimates were exceeded, as if under our system Estimates had never been exceeded. In his speech last year upon naval matters, the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) pointed out that the Estimates for four ships had been exceeded, in one case by £100,000, in another case by £200,000, in another case by £150,000, and in another case by £60,000; and yet this hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Admiralty spoke about the Estimates for the French building programme being exceeded because an Admiral, and not a civilian, was at the head of affairs. He (Admiral Field) drew a different conclusion. He believed the reason was that France was afflicted with extreme Radicals as we were in this country, and that Radicals in France squeezed the Government and endeavoured to displace naval men who knew their business and put in their place scheming politicians who knew nothing about the business. That was the explanation of a civilian having displaced an Admiral as Minister of Marine. To show he was right in his contention, and that the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Forwood) was wrong, that there was not an atom of foundation for the hon. Gentleman's argument, he might say that within three days of the delivery of the hon. Gentleman's speech the Minister of Marine—a clever civilian—was turned out of Office and an Admiral put in his place. Yes; and he was a retired Admiral if they pleased. [*Laughter.*] He thought that would create a laugh. He (Admiral Field) was a retired Admiral too. The French Government thought more of retired Admirals than the Government of this country did. He hoped he had answered the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Admiralty; but he asked the First Lord of the Admiralty to utter one word of caution to his subordinate. It was as well that the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Forwood), when he made a speech in the country upon naval questions, should abstain from criticizing Admirals of whom his own Chief the First Lord of the Admiralty spoke in terms of praise. It was not seemly; it was not conducive to naval discipline that the Secretary to the Admiralty, who was the servant of the Board, should get up on a public platform, and before a popular audience lampoon naval officers who were his superiors and his masters. Now, he had put upon the Notice Paper an Amendment, and he regretted that by the Rules of the House he was precluded from moving it. He had desired to call attention to the executive administration of the Admiralty, and to show that the root of the evil of the present system was that the Orders in Council that were passed in 1869, again passed and issued in 1872, and again issued in 1882, were Orders which undermined the authority and impaired the responsibility of the Naval Lords of the Admiralty, and that those Orders in Council were in themselves mischievous, and should be cancelled.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question again proposed.

It being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, he would appeal to hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House to assist the Government in taking the Vote early on Thursday. It was absolutely necessary that the Vote should then be taken.

Debate to be resumed upon *Thursday.*

MOTIONS.

PRIVATE BILL LEGISLATION.

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Motion made, and Question proposed·

"That a Committee of Six Members of this House be appointed to join with a Committee of the House of Lords to examine into the present system of Private Bill Legislation, and to report how far, and in what manner, without prejudice to public interests, that system may be modified, with a view to the interests of suitors, the economy of the time of Parliament, and the reduction of costs and charges."—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked when the right hon. Gentleman proposed to submit the names of Members to compose this Committee? Would

an Irish Member be included? He would suggest that the Motion should be postponed for a week, in order that the nomination might be proposed at the same time.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, it was following the usual course to agree to the appointment of such a Committee first, following it up with the nomination after an interval, to allow of the arrangements being made. It would probably be found expedient to include the name of an hon. Member from Ireland.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick) asked, would the right hon. Gentleman undertake that at least one Scotch Member should be nominated?

MR. W. H. SMITH said, there was every intention of nominating a fairly representative Committee.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords, to acquaint their Lordships, That this House hath appointed a Committee of Six Members to join with a Committee of the Lords to examine into the present system of Private Bill Legislation, and to report how far, and in what manner, without prejudice to public interests, that system may be modified; with a view to the interests of suitors, the economy of the time of Parliament, and the reduction of costs and charges. —(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

WESTMINSTER ABBEY BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE. FIRST READING.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, if the House would allow the introduction of this Bill, having for its object the repair of Westminster Abbey, he proposed to defer a statement until the second reading stage. He would, however, just state for the information of hon. Members that the Bill would involve no charge upon the taxpayers.

Motion made, and Question,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make further provision for the restoration and repair of Westminster Abbey,"—(*Mr. William Henry Smith,*)

—put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Secretary Matthews, and Mr. Jackson.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 165.]

EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENTS (SCOTLAND) ACT 1882 (MADRAS COLLEGE).

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

MR. S. WILLIAMSON (Kilmarnock) said, it might seem ungrateful to criticize any scheme in regard to the Educational Endowments of Scotland under this Act, seeing what good work the Commissioners had done. This acknowledgment would be endorsed by every Scotchman; but, at the same time, there were circumstances in regard to this particular case that seemed to call for protest. He had to point out several objectional features in the scheme, and first he had to refer to the objection urged by the School Board of St. Andrews, a popularly elected body. The scheme was divided into two parts—the governing part, and the financial part. The objection of the School Board was that the proposed Governing Body would not be sufficiently popular. It would be remembered that the founder of the school (Dr. Bell) left a large sum of money to carry out certain views he held in regard to education, and the school or college thereby established absorbed the parish school and the burgh or grammar school, taking over the buildings and other educational arrangements. In doing this Dr. Bell, who was not a Presbyterian, but Prebendary of St. Peter's, Westminster, naturally had to submit to the use and wont of Scotland in regard to education at that time, which placed the control of it in the hands of the Established Church. But times had changed, and such control had been taken out of the hands of the Established Church. One of the objections of the people of St. Andrew's was that the scheme did, in some measure, perpetuate the power of the Established Church in regard to the appointment of Governors. Section 3 provided that a Governor should be elected by the Presbytery of St. Andrew's to the exclusion of the Free Church and the United Presbyterian; and the contention of the people was that it would be far more reasonable to allow a life Governor to be appointed by the ministers of religion in the city, not giving the power to one denomination merely. They also objected to the appointment of a Governor by the Sheriff of Fife. They not unreasonably wished that the Governing Body should be established on a wider and more popular basis. A graver objection, perhaps, was that made to the financial position of the scheme. Madras College had swallowed up the parish school and the burgh school; and the ratepayers not unnaturally claimed that they should be relieved, to a certain extent, by the College endowments from the expense of building and of purchasing a site to meet the requirements of Scotch Educational Law. A very considerable sum of money was to be handed over to the Governors from the Bell residue fund. It might be said that the scheme would not make any enormous demand upon the rates; but St. Andrew's was a small and not a rich town, with only 6,000 inhabitants, who had been put to great expense recently by bringing water into the city, and were, in fact, heavily taxed. It was, he thought, only reasonable that, out of the large educational endowments, they should receive some consideration; and he thought the House would see the justice of this. He also objected to Clause 39, in regard to scholarships. It was proposed to apply £90 a-year in bursaries, and this was to be distributed by the School Board in conjunction with the Governing Body. But the School Board came more in contact with the people, and it would be far better to hand this over entirely to the School Board, instead of to a joint committee of the School Board and the Madras College. He also had to object to Clause 42, which gave the option of giving the bursaries to scholars either for the University or Madras College; but the desire of the Founder, Dr. Bell, was that it should be given to those going to the University only, and not to those going to Madras College. He thought these were valid grounds for criticizing the scheme; and, while he considered the Education Commissioners had deserved well of the country, he urged these considerations in the interest of primary education in St. Andrew's, and hoped the House would view them with favour.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold Her consent from the Scheme for the Management of the Endowment in the Burgh of St. Andrew's and County of Fife, known as the Madras College, now lying upon the Table of the House."—(*Mr. Stephen Williamson.*)

MR. J. A. CAMPBELL (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) said, he was sorry his hon. Friend (Mr. S. Williamson) had thought it necessary to trouble the House with any opposition to this scheme. The Endowment Commissioners found that this Madras Colledge was, to a considerable extent, doing the work that ought to have been done by the board schools of the town, and they, after full consideration, and hearing all that could be said, both by those who were interested and those who understood the circumstances, came to the conclusion that it was their duty to constitute Madras College a higher class school for more advanced tuition; and they had done so, availing themselves of the endowments of the College, and adding thereto a further contribution from another fund, left by the same founder—the Bell Residue Fund. He might mention that the endowment, although at one time of a good amount, was now considerably diminished owing to the circumstance that the investments were chiefly in landed property. The income of the College, at present, was £560 a-year, and by the contribution from the Bell Residue Fund the amount would be raised to £700, for the endowment of this higher class school. His hon. Friend objected to the constitution of the Governing Body; but he (Mr. Campbell) thought it could not be considered as not sufficiently popular. The Governors were to be 10 in number, and of these two would be elected by the Town Council of St. Andrew's, two by the School Board, two by the Senate of the University of St. Andrew's, one by the Lord Lieutenant of the County, one by the Sheriff of Fife, and two by the existing Bell Trustees. When vacancies occurred by the death of these life Governors, one would be elected by the Presbytery of St. Andrew's, and one by the rural School Board. He thought the House would consider that, after all, that was a rather popular body of trustees. His hon. Friend complained of power being conferred on the Established Church. Well, the Commissioners required to have regard to the constitution of existing trusts when forming new Governing Bodies, and it was because of the interest the Established Church had in Madras College as it was, they had introduced this very small element of one member out of 10 to be appointed by the Presbytery of St. Andrew's. His hon. Friend complained of the scheme of the Commissioners imposing a fresh burden on the school board of the town; but that was because the Commissioners found that the Bell Trustees had been relieving the school board of part of its duty. But in instituting the new scheme they had set apart £90, to be paid for the fees of children attending public schools in St. Andrew's. Twenty poor children would receive free scholarships in Madras College; and £100 a-year would be given in bursaries and scholarships, varying from £10 to £20, to children whose parents required assistance towards giving then a higher education. Altogether, he believed the scheme was by no means unwelcome to the people of St. Andrew's generally. The Commissioners were not aware that there were any objections to be brought against the scheme, and he believed that such were not brought forward during the time allowed for receipt of objections. On the whole, he hoped the House would not think of disturbing a scheme to which there had been no objection until his hon. Friend placed his Notice on the Paper.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities) said, he must point out to the House the extreme inconvenience of the way in which this scheme had been dealt with. The scheme was passed by the Commissioners so far back as December, 1886, and the Scotch Education Department waited a considerable time to see if any objection was made to it. A small objection was urged on behalf of the University of St. Andrew's, which was stated in such a form as to indicate that they did not wish to press it, but only to have it considered. He presumed that that was what his hon. Friend (Mr. Williamson) had alluded to—the question of the bursaries being given partly to the University and partly to the College. But the objection was ultimately withdrawn. The Education Department waited an entire year, and only in December last approved of the scheme. Up to that time no such objections as those made that night by the hon. Member were suggested; they had been made now for the first time, and without notice given to the Education Department, that they might have the opportunity of considering whether the scheme should be referred back to the Commissioners for reconsideration. The House was now asked to deal with a matter in reference to which the proper course of representation for getting revision had not been taken. This fact bore very strongly on the question whether it was right and just that the House should be asked to review the decision of the Commissioners, when the ordinary and proper course of proceeding, by getting the scheme reviewed by the Education Department, had never been put into operation at all. His hon. Friend (Mr. Campbell) had fully explained the ground upon which the Commissioners proceeded in dealing with this endowment; and in disposing of this or any other educational scheme, it could not be expected that the Commissioners would please everybody by their decision. It appeared to him that, in this instance, the Commissioners had acted with a very wise discretion, and he could not think that their decision had excited much public feeling, when during a whole year not the slightest objection was taken.

MR. S. WILLIAMSON said, he would remind the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate that there were three schemes connected with Madras College, and that it was impossible to take action against one until the bearing of the whole of the schemes was ascertained. He would appeal to him to postpone the matter for another year.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD: No, no!

Question put, and *negatived.*

COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.

Ordered, That the Committee of Public Accounts do consist of Twelve Members.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

COUNTY COURTS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. T. M. Healy, Bill to amend the County Courts (Ireland) Acts, and to improve the administration of the Law in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Clancy, Mr. Chance, and Mr. Maurice Healy.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 166.]

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT (1875) AMENDMENT (NO. 2) BILL.

Order for Second Reading upon *Wednesday* 18th April read, and *discharged:*—Bill *withdrawn.*

Ordered, That leave be given to bring in a Bill, instead thereof, to amend "The Friendly Societies Act, 1875," and that Mr. Francis Stevenson, Mr. Picton, Mr. Channing, Mr. Burt, Mr Caldwell, and Mr. Mason, do prepare and bring it in.

House adjourned at half after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 13*th March,* 1888.

MINUTES.] — PUBLIC BILLS — *Committee* — Railway and Canal Traffic (12-41).

Third Reading — Mortmain and Charitable Uses* (33); Pluralities Acts Amendment Act, 1885, Amendment* (26), and *passed.*

RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC BILL.

(*The Lord Stanley of Preston.*)

(NO. 12.) COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to order).

Clauses 1 to 5 *agreed to.*

Clause 6 (Appointment of Additional Judge).

On the Motion of Lord STANLEY of PRESTON, Amendment made.

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clauses 7 to 9, inclusive, *agreed to.*

Clause 12 (Power to award damages).

THE EARL OF JERSEY said, that as the noble Lord had given the Commissioners power to award damages which could not now be claimed, he had intended to move to leave out one year and to insert three years, so that the Commissioners might have power to go back three years before the complaint was made. He was willing, however, to agree to a compromise of two years, and he begged to move an Amendment to that effect.

Amendment *moved,* in page 5, line 25, leave out ("one year,") and insert ("two years.")—(*The Earl of Jersey.*)

LORD STANLEY OF PRESTON said, that at present the Commissioners might declare practices illegal, but they had no power to award damages which might have accrued under such illegal practices in past years. Damages could only be recovered as the result of a separate action. It was thought expedient to consolidate these two operations in one clause, but it was only fair that certain limitations should be fixed to prevent actions after a lapse of time, and it was thought that two years would meet all legitimate complaints.

LORD BRAMWELL said, that if by this clause it was intended to transfer to the Commissioners after hearing complaints the power to give damages for a wrong which had been done or a breach of contract, it seemed to him in all fairness that there ought to be no limitation other than that which existed in a Court of Law. But if Clause 12 was to confer some right of giving damages where there was no cause of action, he was opposed to such a proposal, whether limited to one year or two years.

Lord HERSCHELL said, he believed the clause was intended to give damages where there was no right of action at present. Where a man made a charge of undue preference, as the law at present stood, he could go to the Commissioners and say that the Railway Company was treating him differently from his neighbour, and ask them to stop the Company from doing so. But it was quite clear that the law gave him no right of damages for what had been done. He was of opinion that the clause would lead to a large crop of litigation, and that some Amendment was desirable to make clear what was intended.

The LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord Halsbury) said, that it was right that the matter should be made clear, and no doubt his noble Friend would explain what was intended. But he thought that the compromise which the noble Earl was willing to accept was desirable.

The Earl of KIMBERLEY observed that what they wanted to know was whether this clause did or did not give any new right of action.

Lord STANLEY of PRESTON explained that it was only a better and simpler form of procedure. It merely endeavoured to settle by one action before the Commissioners what must now be matter for two actions.

Lord BRAMWELL said, that he understood it was meant by the clause to give the Commissioners power to award damages where there was no cause of action. If it meant to give a right to damages, which did not now exist, in all fairness let the clause specify that, so that their lordships might know with what they were dealing.

Lord HALSBURY said that it was not the intention of the clause to give any right of action that did not now exist.

Amendment *agreed to.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clauses 13 to 24, inclusive, *agreed to.*

Clause 24 (Revised classification of traffic and schedule of rates).

Lord HENNIKER, in moving the following Amendment, to insert:—

"And in every case those maximum rates and charges shall be deemed to include all terminal charges of every description other than charges for loading, unloading, collection, and delivery of traffic where such services are performed by the Company, and every Company shall state in such classification and schedule the nature and amount of the charges proposed to be authorized for loading, unloading, collection, and delivery of each class of traffic when such services are performed by the Company,"

said, that in bringing this matter forward he was in no way acting for himself. He had been engaged with various bodies of traders in the country for some time in dealing with this question, and his Amendment was supported by the Railway and Canal Traders' Association, by a Committee of Members of both Houses over which he presided, by the Lancashire and Cheshire Corporation, by the Central Chamber of Agriculture, and, in fact, by traders generally throughout the country. What the traders wanted was that terminals should be included in the maximum rates. They wanted a clause in the Bill not based on a technical decision, such as the decision of the Divisional Court on the subject, but a clause framed upon a decision on the merits. The traders claimed that since the decision of 1885, on which the clause was founded, they had had two other decisions in their favour. It might be said that those two cases were very small cases in the County Court, but the Railway Companies very well knew that they were brought forward as test cases, and the principle involved in them was exactly similar to that involved in the case decided in 1885. The smallness of the issue had nothing whatever to do with the matter. The trader who represented the body of traders in these two County Court cases had two statements of rates given to him. The first was that, for a distance of nine miles, he was to send at least a ton weight of iron, and for every 500lb. he was to be charged 8*s.* 4*d.* After the decision in the County Court the rate quoted to him was the minimum weight sent should be 500lb. at 2*s.* 4*d.* It could not be denied that such figures made a great difference in the profits of a trader. He did not wish to press his Amendment unduly in the House, but he appealed to the noble

Lord in charge of the Bill and to the House to take this point into their most serious consideration. It was one of the most important points in the Bill, and he was certain that the traders of the country would never be satisfied unless something of the kind were inserted.

Amendment *moved,*

In page 9, line 6, leave out from ("company") to the end of subsection (1.) and insert (" and in every case those maximum rates and charges shall be deemed to include all terminal charges of every description other than charges for loading, unloading, collection, and delivery of traffic, where such services are performed by the company, and every company shall state in such classification and schedule the nature and amount of the charges proposed to be authorized for loading, unloading, collection, and delivery of each class of traffic when such services are performed by the company.")—(*The Lord Henniker.*)

LORD BRAMWELL said, he believed that what the noble Lord proposed was the law at present. He did not think the Railway Companies had any right to make a great many of these terminal charges. The Companies were in the position of insurers. When an article was given to them to carry they must insure its safe delivery uninjured, and they had no right to charge any sum of money for doing that which merely protected them from the consequences of injury to the chattel in the course of its journey. That was his opinion of the general law relating to railways. He would not, however, say that no terminal charges whatever were right, and he would remind their Lordships that there was one case in which it was decided on the terms of the Act of a particular Ompany—the London and Brighton—that the Company had a right to make some of these charges. He thought that this clause would, in effect, only declare the present state of the general law, though possibly that view would not be assented to by all lawyers. He spoke from his recollection of a case decided some years ago. There was, however, this difficulty, that if their Lordships accepted this Amendment, it would take away from the London and Brighton Company a right they at present possessed by statute. In the circumstances he hesitated to recommend the House to accept or reject this Amendment.

LORD GRIMTHORPE said, he should have the utmost respect for the noble and learned Lord's authority if judicially quoted; but he understood that the noble and learned Lord was merely mentioning his recollection of the case. What was the name of the case?

LORD BRAMWELL; It was a case that came before me at Assizes.

LORD GRIMTHORPE: Where?

LORD BRAMWELL: In Glamorganshire.

LORD GRIMTHORPE said, he declined to accept the authority of that Glamorganshire case as ruling the generality of English railways. He knew from experience that some of the older, and perhaps the newer, Welsh railways had clauses not in the common form. That of "Hall *v.* the Brighton Railway," and of "Kempson *v.* the Great Western," which was taken to be governed by Hall's case, was certainly in the common form. At least he had that morning asked that question of the solicitors of several Companies who came to him, and they told him it was so. The assertion that the Brighton decision turned upon a technicality was altogether unfounded. So far from that, the Judges of the Queen's Bench Division said that the contention of the claimant Hall was utterly unreasonable; and they carefully explained the three successive stages of legislation about terminals; first, where the Companies were supposed or expected only to provide the road, like canals; secondly, where they were to haul for carriers like Pickford, who for a long time did all the terminal work, and charged very much higher terminals than the Companies had ever done; and, thirdly, the present state of things, where the Companies do everything and were allowed by their Acts to charge a reasonable sum for it, which the Railway Commissioners judged of in each case according to the accommodation provided. The Amendment would be a retrograde step, and would inflict the greatest injustice on Railway Companies, who had expended many millions in erecting sidings, wharfs, and warehouses on the assurance of being repaid for their outlay by terminal charges. He remembered it being proved in a Committee that there were three miles of sidings at Hull occupied by coal waggons, because there ware no ships ready to carry them off. He thought that the Amendment was monstrously unreasonable, as the Judges had pronounced Hall's claim to be.

LORD HENNIKER said, that the noble Lord who had just sat down took a too exclusively railway view of this question. No doubt, Railway Companies would like to charge rates in respect to their outlay upon stations; but when that outlay had not been reasonably incurred, surely no charge ought to be allowed in respect of it. Nothing unreasonable, so far as he could see, was asked on behalf of the trader. All that was asked was that he should not be compelled to pay for the mistakes of Railway Companies. Maximum charges should include everything necessary for carrying on the business of a railway. For extra service the trader was willing to pay.

LORD HERSCHELL said, it would be perfectly competent for the railways, if the Amendment passed, to re-adjust their maximum rates so as to include terminal charges. It should be remembered that the provisions of different Railway Acts with reference to terminal charges were by no means identical. In some cases Companies had fixed low rates for short distances in consideration of the right to make terminal charges. It would be unreasonable of the Legislature to sweep away all terminal charges without paying regard to the different circumstances sanctioned by different Acts of Parliament. It would hardly be wise or just to lay down the hard and fast rule that in this matter of terminal charges all Railway Companies must be dealt with alike.

LORD MONK-BRETTON said, that in 1873 he was a Member of the Joint Committee of the two Houses out of which the Railway Commission sprang. That Committee went fully into all these questions, and reported that the law as to terminals was confused, and it recommended that Parliament should distinctly recognize not only service terminals, but "Station" terminals. It further reported that it was not advisable to fix a maximum, because it must necessarily be fixed at a higher rate than the actual charge. There was an expression of opinion, particularly on the part of the coal merchants, that it was not desirable, although terminals should be recognized, that a maximum should be fixed for them. This opinion of the Joint Committee was endorsed by a Select Committee of the House of Commons presided over by Mr. Evelyn Ashley, out of which the present Bill arose. No doubt, in some cases of short traffic, terminals added to the charges for conveyance would exceed the allowed maximum rates for conveyance; but it was obvious that if you prohibited terminals a Railway Company losing in that direction would be obliged to raise its charges in other directions. He hoped the House would adhere to the Bill as it stood and recognize terminals, subject to the discretion of the Railway Commission to ascertain in each case whether they were reasonable or not; and, therefore, he trusted that their Lordships would not adopt the Amendment.

LORD STALBRIDGE thought the accusations which had been made against the Railway Companies in respect of their conduct in the case of Kempson and Hall were answered by the statement of the transactions between the litigants and the Companies, and the readiness of the Companies to correct the mistakes in the charges they had made. In short distances—say one of six miles from London—it would be impossible to make a rate that would cover terminal charges, inasmuch as those charges necessarily decreased with long distances; and, therefore, he hoped the Amendment would not be adopted.

LORD STANLEY OF PRESTON said, that the noble and learned Lord opposite had stated so clearly what was the effect of the Amendment that he did not feel called upon to follow him. He entirely sympathized with the object of the mover of the Amendment, and recognized that he was acting for a powerful body; and it was in no spirit of antagonism that he was compelled to resist the Amendment. The question of terminals had given much trouble in the preparation of the Bill; he had received deputations on both sides; he had had personal conferences with the representatives of traders and of the Railway Companies, to see whether the existing difficulties could be removed; and he came to the conclusion that, on the whole, the best course was to take the decision of the Queen's Bench in Hall's case, as laying down in general terms the principles by which they were to be guided. An essential Amendment was made in the Bill before it was introduced, with regard to undue charges for terminals, which were supposed to be placed on goods for the sake of recouping undue expenditure on stations. In the determination of terminal charges regard was to be had only to expenditure that was reasonable and necessary to provide proper accommodation for the goods in respect of which the charge was made. Therefore goods were not to be made to pay for expensive passenger stations. This matter of terminals would have to be left to be fought between the parties concerned and the Board of Trade, with an ultimate reference to Parliament. In the majority of cases the rates the Companies would charge, even if considerable terminals were added, would be well within their statutory limits; and it was only in respect of short distances that the question of terminals would arise. The Amendment went further than was intended; it would have the effect, he would not say of confiscation, but of injuring many Companies; and he therefore recommended their Lordships to adhere to the clause as it stood, coupled with the definition of terminals in the definition clause of the Bill.

Amendment (by leave of the Committee) *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 25 (Undue preference in case of unequal rates and charges, and unequal services performed).

THE EARL OF JERSEY, in moving to leave out words which provided that whenever it was shown that—

> "In the adjustment of the rates and charges of a railway company there is a difference in the treatment of British merchandize and foreign merchandize,"

said, the burden of proving that such difference in treatment did not amount to an undue preference should lie on the Railway Companies. He had taken the advice given by the noble Marquess on the second reading of the Bill, and had again brought this subject forward. This question of preferential charges and foreign bounties interested very deeply the traders and agriculturists of the country. It would not be necessary for him on the present occasion to quote again the numerous instances in which advantages were given by Railway Companies to foreign producers, to the enormous disadvantage of the home producer. Their Lordships would recollect that in some cases it was shown that British goods were carried at double the rates at which the Railway Companies carried foreign goods. Neither was it necessary that he should point out how very hurtful to the industries of the country the system of preferential bounties must be. The British trader who paid double the rate of the foreign trader was placed in a position of considerable difficulty when he got into the market; and the agriculturists of the country could not be satisfied with a system which carried English produce at 22*s.* 4*d.* while foreign produce was charged for the same distance 8*s.* 4*d.* It was against such a state of things that he moved the Amendment. The traders and agriculturists wished to have a fair field and no favour. The noble and learned Lord opposite (Lord Bramwell) had stated, though not in so many words, that if Parliament attempted to regulate the interpretation which Railway Companies should put upon their Acts of Parliament, it was confiscation; that if equal terms were given to English and foreign goods it was Protection; that if the Railways did not offer these bounties the goods would go by sea; and that as the home producer must have the goods carried to his own district, it was only right that the Companies should charge him 20 times more than they did the foreigner. No one wished to confiscate the property of the Railway Companies, and they all acknowledged the great benefits bestowed upon the country by railways and the great ability which the directors had shown in their management; but he contended that Parliament had a right to inquire into the manner in which Acts were carried out. He denied that the Amendment would bring about anything in the nature of confiscation. Then with regard to Protection; if bounties were offered they were in the nature of Protection, and it was against this system that he protested. On another point of the noble and learned Lord foreign goods could not be carried to very many places by sea, and they had, therefore, to be carried by railway, yet these goods were charged a very much lower rate than English goods, so that the sea competitions argument fell to the ground. It was not right that the Railway Companies should be able to say that they would charge the trader what they liked because they had got him in their hands. He maintained that any preference granted upon the ground that the goods were foreign and not British was an undue preference, and that the injustice under which the traders now suffered would be increased by the Bill. At the present time undue preference was contrary to the law, but the clause now under discussion would legalize it. If they passed this clause as it now stood they would have declared that, in certain circumstances, foreign preferential rates might become legal. The greatest indignation was felt with regard to this matter all over the country. Agriculturists were not afraid of competition carried on upon fair terms, but they did object to having to pay extra charges on the carriage of their goods. They did not advocate Protection or confiscation, but that the same treatment should be dealt to them as to the foreigner. It was perfectly fair and reasonable that it should be so, and it would be to the permanent interest of the British public, whether consumers or producers.

Amendment *moved*,

In page 11, line 5, to leave out from "district" to "burden" in line 9.—(*The Earl of Jersey.*)

Lord WALSINGHAM said, he supported the Amendment of the noble Earl, not only on account of the urgent necessity of such relief as it promised to afford to the agricultural industry, but on the ground that the clause, as it stood, would practically afford no such relief at all. He was quite willing to give the Government credit for the true and conscientious belief they had avowed that this clause, as drawn, would have the effect of putting a stop to undue preferences. He felt sure that that had been their honest intention in framing the Bill; but he was equally convinced that the wording of the clause must effectually defeat that object. This clause put upon the Railway Companies the burden of proving that a lower charge or difference of treatment in the adjustment of traffic rates, as between British and foreign merchandize, did not amount to any undue preference; and it proceeded to direct the Court having jurisdiction in the matter or the Commissioners, as the case might be, how they should interpret the word "undue." This Interpretation Clause distinctly sanctioned any degree of preference that could be shown to be necessary to secure the traffic in the interests of the public. Although the burden of proof justifying the preference on these grounds was nominally thrown upon the Railway Companies, he maintained that practically the burden of this proof would invariably be thrown upon those who suffered by its operation. He asked their Lordships what chance there was that any body of English agriculturists, scattered widely over the face of the country by reason of the very nature of their business, and, therefore, seldom able to combine successfully for any common purpose, would be able to refute the assertions of a powerful combination of Railway Directors armed with the usual kaleidoscopic phalanx of statistics, and contending that if an extra shilling per ton were charged on the conveyance of imported produce, new markets would at once be opened in other countries to divert our supplies? It was, unfortunately, too true that the agricultural interest was weak in Parliament as compared with other interests; and simply because a personal attention to the anxious business of the cultivation and management of land was incompatible with the urgent and tedious requirements of Parliamentary study. They had a right to ask that the Government of the country should not allow unfair advantage to be taken over our struggling industries by the more powerful factions whose pecuniary interests might on this point be at variance with their own. When they considered what proportion of the burden of taxation fell upon land, who would deny that the fees they paid were a heavy drain upon their resources, and were of no small importance to the National Exchequer? Arable farming, under the average conditions which subsisted at present in this country, was a slowly perishing industry, and it would not long continue to contribute heavily to the national taxation. Probably, next to tenant farmers themselves, no body of men in England were better acquainted with the extent and spread of agricultural depression than the Members of their Lordships' House. Several of their Lordships had told him in private conversation that they could not support the Amendment because they were Railway Directors. He would ask those who were interested in railway management where was the logic of reducing their rents as landlords by 5*s.* and 10*s.* per acre, and then, as Railway Directors, inflicting at the same time a tax which had been computed in the Eastern Counties at 14*s.* per acre for wheat and £4 18*s.* per acre for potatoes upon the process of sending their tenants' crops to the great central markets? He would quote a few words from a leaflet issued by Messrs. Watson, Todd, and Co., of the Midland Flour Mills, at Birmingham—

> "As an acre of well-farmed land will produce four and a-half quarters or a ton of wheat, and as the farmer on the East Coast has to pay 22*s.* 4*d.* freight for his ton of wheat against 8*s.* 4*d.* for a ton of foreign from Cardiff, an equal distance to Birmingham, the farmer is Boycotted by the Railway Company, and compelled to pay a bounty of 14*s.* per acre, or a sum equal to a second rental, to get his acre of wheat to the consuming market. Also, as an acre of land planted with potatoes will produce seven tons, and as the difference between the English and foreign rates to the consuming market is 14*s.* per ton against the English producer, the East Coast farmer has to pay a bounty to the railway of £4 18*s.* per acre, in addition to what is paid by the foreigner, to send his acre of potatoes to the Birmingham market. Hence, if a farmer in the East of England grows 100 acres of potatoes and sends them to Birmingham, he pays the modest sum of £490 more freight than is paid by the foreigner on a like quantity, for an equal distance."

He would further ask those of their Lordships who affected to snort at the faintest odour of Protection, as a horse shied at a fresh bear's skin, how it could be, in any sense, good policy to give an actual bounty to the foreign producer rather than to place the home producer upon fair and equal terms? In the one way they injured the consumer by diverting capital from home investments to a far greater extent than they benefited him by cheapening his necessaries. In the other, they strengthened, if ever so little, the tottering mainstay of the home prosperity and happiness of our rural population. The time might come—he did not say that it would—when the cry for some far more actual protection than this would arise from the great mass of the working men of this country; and when it came, how should they who employ them resist it? The men had the voting power which would enable them to insist upon it, and not only to carry it, but, contrary to former precedents, to secure their full and fair share of its advantages. Of course, the essence of the opposition to this equitable and harmless adjustment consisted in the plea that they must do nothing contrary to the interests of the consumer; and, therefore, they must not raise the rate of freight on foreign produce. They did not ask that it should be raised—they would be quite satisfied that the rate upon English produce should be lowered to the same figure; but if they declined to do this, the agriculturists asked that they would at least split the difference. Thus, by taking off from the home producer the same proportion by which they increased their charges to the foreigner, they would secure the whole amount for their shareholders as before. If it was answered that in this case the coasting steamers would secure a part of the present railway traffic, that exposed the shallowness of the plea for the interests of the consumer; the produce would reach him all the same, and probably at an unappreciably increased cost, which would be more than repaid by the increased purchasing and trading power which he would then share with the home producer. On these grounds he supported the Amendment proposed by the noble Earl.

LORD STANLEY OF PRESTON said, he confessed to having a great deal of sympathy with the reasons that actuated the noble Earl in moving his Amendment; but he could not say that the conclusions arrived at by the Government last year were in the slightest degree shaken by the arguments that had been advanced. His noble Friend had spoken on behalf of the agricultural interest, an interest with which their Lordships were closely connected, and with which they at present deeply sympathized. But it had been his duty more than once to point out that the Government had not to consider the agricultural, commercial, or railway interests alone. The noble Lord left out some other considerations, which ought to be taken into account in dealing with so large a question as this. The Amendment of the noble Earl divided itself into two parts, and supposed a preference given to foreign over British producers, or to traders living at a distance over other traders. But he must ask their Lordships to consider this matter rather with reference to the provisions of the Bill than to any inequality of rates which might exist at present. The Bill said distinctly that whenever it was shown that any Railway Company charged one trader or class of traders in any district lower rates for the same or similar merchandize, or for the same or similar services than they charged other traders, the burden of proving that such lower charges or difference of treatment did not amount to an undue preference should lie on the Railway Company. It was admitted that such inequalities should not for a moment be allowed to exist unless there were strong reasons which, in the interest of the general public, rendered such inequality advisable as in other cases would be inadvisable. It was at the instance of the noble Earl who moved the Amendment that the Government accepted one of the largest changes made in the Bill of last year, with a view to strengthen the Court of the Railway Commissioners in a manner which would inspire the public with greater confidence. Were their Lordships now to withdraw from the Court, strengthened at the instance of his noble Friend, the right of saying whether different rates should be charged; and were they to lay down a hard and fast line which should leave no power to the Commissioners to take into consideration the subject of the clause? He was quite alive to the fact that foreign produce was carried past the door of the native producer on terms which made it impossible for him to compete with the foreigner. But the origin of the produce was not the only point which should be considered. As the whole clause had reference to preferential rates on whatever traffic could be carried, they must take into account other considerations that might have a great influence on the matter. He thought it was now tacitly admitted by all bodies of traders that persons dealing in large quantities and at regular intervals with the Railway Companies ought to be allowed certain advantages over those who did not deal in such large quantities and so regularly. A point which could not be put out of sight was this, that where a Railway Company had traffic to carry in large quantities, and at regular periods and under convenient conditions for its reception and carriage, that was an element which ought fairly to be brought before the Commissioners, and which in the majority of cases might form good ground why a preferential rate should be allowed. Another point was that the words "in the interest of the public" were inserted last year in order to show that where a Railway Company carried at different rates it must be not so much in the interest of the Railway Company itself as of the general public. Where there were two Companies running lines to any place, one of them might find that it could afford to carry traffic at a lower rate, although the actual distance might be longer. What conceivable advantage was given to the consumer if you laid down a hard and fast line to prevent the Commissioners from allowing that to be done? The tendency of such a course would be to throw the traffic into the shorter line, and it required no gift of prophecy to foretell that when the competing line was prevented from carrying the traffic, the Company which had got the sole command might not choose any longer to carry at as low a rate as before. Then there was another point. Although there was undoubtedly a very general opinion that this was a matter in which the agricultural interest was hardly dealt with, he must point out that the agricultural interest would be one of the very first to suffer if these preferential rates were absolutely prohibited. To do away with such rates would be to place the large towns in the same position as they would be if there were no competition between railways. It would prevent many of the great agricultural counties from sending their produce at anything like a paying rate to London and many of the large towns. If they laid down a hard and fast rule, and said that no preferential rates were to be allowed——

THE EARL OF JERSEY: I am sorry to interrupt the noble Lord, but I referred to foreign preferential rates.

LORD STANLEY OF PRESTON said, he understood the argument of the noble Earl to apply to the general question of preferential rates, and he might be allowed to point out that if preferential rates were to be prohibited there would probably be loss, not gain, to the agricultural world. He always found that complaint was made only of the import rate. They all knew that in certain parts of the country it was cheaper for farmers to feed their stock upon grain imported from abroad than upon grain grown by themselves. But if the Amendment passed in its present form, it must be remembered that they did away not only with the import rates, but with all the preferential rates affecting the export traffic, which would have the effect of interfering with the trade of many large centres of industry, which, owing to the large quantity of goods they could place upon the railways at preferential rates, enabled them to compete with foreign producers. He was bound to say that, having considered all these questions, and having weighed very carefully the words of the noble Earl, the Government had come to the conclusion that, at the present time, it was not their duty to consent to any essential change in this matter. He had never disguised from their Lordships that he thought this was a question that would be very considerably ventilated "elsewhere," and upon which it was very desirable that the Representatives of the great ports should have an opportunity of expressing their opinion. He much regretted that he was obliged to give such an unqualified negative to his noble Friend; but he did not think that the considerations he had advanced in favour of his proposal, great though they were, were sufficient to outweigh the difficulties of the case. He must, therefore, ask their Lordships to adopt the clause as it stood.

LORD HERSCHELL said, that his belief was that the words the noble Earl wished to introduce into the clause would either have no effect at all, or else would do a great deal more than he intended them to do. If they meant that in the adjustment of rates and charges the Companies were to charge, under the same circumstances, the same rate for British as for foreign merchandize, then nothing was effected, for that was unquestionably the law at present. The noble Earl could surely not mean that if the circumstances differed the Companies should charge the same rates; yet he (Lord Herschell) could see no construction possible other than one of those two.

THE EARL OF JERSEY said, he quoted cases fram a Return laid on the Table 10 days ago, in which 50*s.* had been charged for English goods and 25*s.* for foreign goods carried under the same conditions.

LORD HERSCHELL said, he did not know why that had not been stopped long ago. All he could say was that it could have been stopped any time since 1854, for the law said that, in the same circumstances, no higher charge should be made for British goods. If the law was clear enough already, he thought it was very unadvisable to add to it words which nobody understood, with a view to making it more definite. He certainly understood the noble Earl to contend that the Companies ought not to charge a person whose goods they were carrying a shorter distance a higher mileage rate than they charged a man whose goods they were carrying a longer distance. He thought the House had a right to know exactly what the noble Earl meant by the Amendment, for as the words stood they might mean that British goods were to be carried 100 miles at the same rate that foreign goods were carried 50 miles.

THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH said, it stood clearly to reason that the Amendment was one of a very important character, and helped considerably to define the clause, which, he contended, was at present somewhat vague and unreliable. He had always looked to every utterance of the noble Marquess at the head of the Government in the country with regard to agriculture with very great anxiety and interest. The country had always believed that with the advent of a Conservative Ministry came the time when agriculture would receive due and proper attention. In the speeches of the noble Marquess agriculturists had had many great and comforting assurances given them that if the Government were able in any way to afford assistance to their languishing industry, they would give them every possible support. This was a question in point, a question of vital importance to the agricultural community. They were placed in a position of rivalry of a fierce character with the foreign producers. They asked for no favour or protection, they only asked for consideration. The noble Marquess might scarcely be aware of the enormous interests concerned in this question. English agriculturists believed that they were handicapped and hampered in their industry by the powers the Railway Companies possessed of charging preferential rates. In this country higher rates were charged, both for passengers and goods, than in any other country in the civilized world. While the people were prepared to pay those rates they asked for fair and equal treatment. If this Amendment were carried it would carry joy throughout the length and breadth of the land, and agriculturists would feel they were saved from one of the greatest drawbacks under which they lay at present.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN said, he wished to recall their Lordships to the point raised by the late Lord Chancellor (Lord Herschell). He asked what was the distinct meaning of the Amendment put forward. He apprehended it was perfectly clear. It was that, in regard to the question of preference between traders at home, the Government would leave it to be decided by the Railway Companies; but as regarded competition between foreign and home produce, the noble Earl proposed to declare by his Amendment that no preference should be given to the foreigner over a British trader. The noble and learned Lord the ex-Lord Chancellor now stated that under the existing law no preference could be given to foreign produce. If that was so, what objection could there be to inserting this Amendment. If there had been no doubt in law on the point, there had, in fact, been much doubt, and this Amendment would remove it. The noble Lord in charge of this Bill had made a speech nominally directed against this Amendment, but nine-tenths of his arguments were beside the mark. He urged that Railway Companies ought to be allowed to have a difference of rates where the quantities carried differed materially. Nobody disputed this point, but it had nothing to do with this Amendment, which was aimed at securing that in future no preference should be given to foreign over British goods.

LORD SUDELEY said, that the speech of the noble and learned Lord the late Lord Chancellor which had just been made, seemed to him to entirely upset their previous notions, as practically what he had stated came to this, that, in his opinion, what was now being done by the Railway Companies in giving preference to foreign goods, was absolutely illegal, if the goods were carried under the same circumstances, between the same towns. Unfortunately, another noble and learned Lord (Lord Bramwell) said that, in his opinion, this was not the correct state of the law. The difference between these great legal authorities showed how impossible it was for the small fruit growers and traders to know what to do, and how uncertain the state of the law really was. There could not be a more convincing proof of how necessary it was to support Lord Jersey's Amendment, and to make the clause as strong as possible. In regard to the argument of Wholesale *v.* Retail—namely, that the Railway Companies ought to be allowed to send large quantities, such as a train full or many trucks full, at a far cheaper rate than they could send small quantities, Lord Sudeley said that this was no doubt right if universal; but he maintained that it was carried out in respect to the foreigner, but was frequently not so in the case of the home producer. He would take the case of the Evesham district, with which he was specially well acquainted. There, during the season, whole trains full were made up daily for the Manchester and other markets, and yet (would the House believe it?) no concession whatever was made for large quantities over 12 cwts. The market gardeners might send several trucks or a train full, but would have no special reduction. If the argument of large quantities were advanced in regard to foreign produce being carried (as it often was), especially from Liverpool to London, he maintained that the same principle ought to be carried out in its entirety in our home districts. In regard to the sea competition, he said there was a point which he thought was often lost sight of, and that was the fact that speed and time enters most materially into the question. There was, for instance an enormous quantity of flowers and fruit which came to London by train from France, and for which a considerably higher price was obtained, provided they arrived in time for certain markets. Being sent by sea, they would arrive several hours later, and being no longer as fresh as those which arrived by train, lower prices were obtained. This was a case in which the sea traffic argument was entirely fallacious, and yet he understood that, notwithstanding this, flowers and fruit were carried from Folkestone and Dover to London at lower rates than those at which the home producer could send them. It seemed to him that this was distinctly wrong, and showed how necessary it was to strengthen the clause, and he hoped the House would pass the noble Earl's Amendment.

LORD BRAMWELL said, he could not think that the effect of the Amendment was seen. If the words of the clause proposed to be left out were omitted, Railway Companies would be relieved of the burden of proof that they gave no preferential rates.

LORD STALBRIDGE said, in some cases the Railway Companies were the means of benefiting agriculturists. Thus, last year, complaints were made that foreign hops were by means of preferential rates brought to the London market from Boulogne at a lower rate than the Kent farmers could send their hops to London. The South-Eastern Railway Company decided to cease giving these foreign hops preferential rates, and the consequence was that they were sent by sea and were able to be sold at 7*s*. 6*d*. less than when they were sent by the South-Eastern Railway, so that the Kent hop growers were in a worse position than before.

EARL FORTESCUE said, he should support the Amendment. These preferential rates were also most unjust to British shipowners, and the shipping interest was at least as important to the national wealth and strength as the railway interest. The Railway Companies, under the authority of their Acts of Parliament, exacted high rates from British producers and manufacfacturers, which enabled them to offer preferential low rates to the foreigners from the port nearest to them, and thus to underbid the shipowners in the conveyance of foreign merchandize to the more distant port of its ultimate destination. They thus gave bounties to the foreigner not only against the British producer and manufacturer, but also against the British shipowner. As an old Free Trader he protested against this.

LORD DE MAULEY, who spoke amid repeated cries of "Divide," said the Bill with such a clause as this would be nothing but a Bill for the preservation of high rates. Rates ought to be distributed equally on the principle of the Post Office. At present charges were so different on different railways that the trader was bewildered by their variety. The agricultural interest only asked to be placed upon an equality with foreigners. The present system was neither fair trade nor free trade.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): The House I know is anxious to divide, and therefore I shall say very few words. But what I wish to impress upon the House is that, as far as I can judge from the debate, we appear to have been discussing that which is not really submitted to our consideration. I have heard speech after speech from my noble Friends behind me, dwelling upon the wrongs of agriculture, upon the abominable character of all undue preferences, upon the necessity of remedying the evil, and upon the hardships that will result if the evil is not remedied. I have heard all those topics dwelt on in eloquent and convincing language, and I have agreed with every word that I have heard. But I am myself convinced that the language which we have put into the Bill is precisely the language by which to deal with the evil and by which the remedy ought to be applied. My noble Friends deny this; they say that by this language the remedy will not be applied, and they offer us words by which they affirm the remedy will be applied better. I have the deepest respect for my noble Friends behind me; I know how fully they represent the country on a great number of subjects, and I know how earnest they are in defence of the interests committed to their charge. But I do not think that I should go to them for the drafting of an Act of Parliament, and it is upon the drafting of an Act of Parliament that we are really going to vote in this Division. The clause in the Bill was considered very anxiously again and again by the Government last year, and what did we hear to-night? We heard the noble and learned Lord the late Lord Chancellor (Lord Herschell) stating that in the first place he was unable to understand the Amendment, and that in the second the only conclusion to which he could come was that it was either absolutely useless or that it would make the law work in a precisely opposite direction from that in which the desires of noble Lords were set. Then the noble and learned Lord opposite said that it appeared to him that the Amendment must have been suggested by persons opposed in interests to those behind me; and, lastly, I may say that these clauses were drafted in this House last Session under the light of the legal knowledge which this House possesses, and that a most important portion of them was carried by the noble and learned Lord (Lord Selborne), who took part in the debates. It is surely not unreasonable for the Government to think that this being the balance of legal opinion, however earnest we may be in desiring to carry out the objects of my noble Friends, and however keenly we may sympathize with all their indignant language—it is surely not unreasonable to think that we shall do better to trust to the language of the Bill than to the language proposed by my noble Friends behind me. I do not wish to go into the merits of the case, because I so entirely agree with my noble Friends as to its main principles that I should have nothing to add to what they have said. We all desire to prevent undue preferences, while we know that some preferences must exist. A noble Lord opposite was indignant with us for discussing these preferences—preferences depending upon frequency and size and custom. But you cannot separate them; the Commissioners will have to deal with these preferences, and your clause is so drafted that it would exclude the consideration of them if it were passed as it stands. The matter comes to this, that if you wish no difference to be made between the treatment of British merchandize and the treatment of foreign merchandize because the one is British and the other is foreign, your wish is embodied in the law now, and will be still more strongly enforced by the present Bill, and the words which you propose will not add in the least to the stringency of the law. But if you wish to say that under no circumstances shall there be preference given to one side as against the other, if the one side is British and the other is foreign, that is a provision which would create an abundance of injustice, and which you would never be able to pass into law. I do not pledge myself to every word of this clause, but I hope that you will allow it, drafted as it has been, to go down now to the other House, where the traders and railway managers can meet one another face to face and discuss the subject. If other words can be added in the House of Commons which will accomplish the object which we have in view in a better way, I shall raise no opposition, not being bound to any particular phraseology. But with the knowledge which we have at present, the Government have no other course to pursue than to resist the Amendment and to support the clause as it stands.

LORD NORTHBOURNE asked whether the noble Marquess would pledge himself that in future there would be no difference of treatment between British and foreign merchandize?

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: As I have tried to explain, it is now the law, and the law will be still more strongly enforced under the present Bill, that no difference ought to be made between English merchandize and foreign merchandize because the one is English and the other is foreign. But it is quite another thing to say that under no circumstances shall one set of merchandize have preferential treatment over another because one set is foreign merchandize and the other British.

THE EARL OF JERSEY said, a subsequent part of the Bill did provide that preference should be shown.

On Question, whether the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause?

Their Lordships *divided*:—Contents 63; Not-Contents 69: Majority 6.

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Wimborne, L.
Zouche of Haryngworth, L.

Clauses 26 to 46, inclusive, *agreed to.*

Clause 47 (Definitions).

Amendment *moved,*

In page 20, after line 30 insert ("the term merchandize in this Act includes cattle, live stock, and animals of all descriptions, also every article whatever be its nature which is carried by railway or canal boat.")—(*The Earl of Jersey.*)

LORD STANLEY OF PRESTON said, he was advised that all these were included by statute already; and if the matter were postponed until the report, he would give a reference to the section.

Amendment (by leave of the Committee) *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

The Report of the Amendments to be received on *Thursday* next; and Bill to be *printed* as amended. (No. 41.)

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT.

Joint Committee with the Committee of the House of Commons appointed to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament: The Lords following were named of the Committee:

The Lord Privy Seal, (*E. Cadogan*).
E. Spencer.
V. Oxenbridge.
L. Kintore, (*E. Kintore*).
L. Sudeley.
L. Colville of Culross.

Ordered that such Committee have power to agree with the Committee of the Commons in the appointment of a Chairman.

PRIVATE BILL LEGISLATION.

Message from the House of Commons that they have appointed a Committee to consist of six members to join with a Committee of their Lordships to examine into the present system of Private Bill legislation, and to report how far and in what manner, without prejudice to public interests, that system may be modified with a view to the interests of suitors, the economy of the time of Parliament, and the reduction of costs and charges; and to request their Lordships to appoint an equal number of Lords to be joined with the Members of that House: Ordered, that the said message be taken into consideration on *Thursday* next.

House adjourned at half past Seven o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 13*th March*, 1888.

MINUTES.] — SELECT COMMITTEES — Army Estimates, *appointed;* Navy Estimates, *appointed;* Revenue Departments Estimates, *appointed.*

PRIVATE BILLS (*by Order*)—*Second Reading*—Brixton Park; Tottenham Local Board (Division of District).*

PUBLIC BILLS—*Ordered—First Reading*—Winchester Burgesses' Disqualification Removal* [168]; Assizes Relief* [169]; Vexatious Indictments (Amendment)* [170].

First Reading—Friendly Societies 'Act (1875) Amendment (No. 3)* [167].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

BRIXTON PARK BILL (*by Order*).

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Dodds.*)

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.), who had a Notice on the Paper of his intention to move the rejection of the Bill, said: Sir, since this Bill was first presented to the House, I am pleased to say that, between its promoters and myself, it has undergone considerable modification. The Bill, as originally drawn, proposed to empower the Lambeth Vestry, in connection with and in conjunction with the Metropolitan Board of Works, to obtain this site for the purpose of forming a public Park or Gardens. It then went on to give power to the same authorities to re-sell or re-let, on building lease, any portion of the ground which they thought proper to sell or let. Now, I considered such a provision to be altogether unreasonable, seeing that it amounted to a proposal to deprive the people of this locality of one of the open spaces in the district. This is the chief proposal in the Bill which I object to. There are some other clauses in the Bill which have been very considerably altered, and others have been removed altogether, so that in a great measure the details of the Bill, and the power originally proposed to be given to the Lambeth Vestry and the Metropolitan Board of Works have been modified. I should like to point out to the House, in order that the Committee before whom the Bill will probably go, may know that even as the Bill now stands it is proposed to allow the continuance on the property of four substantial dwelling-houses. The Bill proposes that 12 acres of land should be purchased for the purpose of forming a Park or Public Gardens. But, at the same time, it is proposed to retain two acres out of the 12 for residential purposes, and those two acres are to be so occupied for an unexpired term of 21 years. Now, I consider this to be an outrageous feature in the Bill, and I strongly deprecate its inclusion. But the Committee who are promoting the measure, and among whom are some hon. Friends of mine, have contributed largely towards the expense, and therefore I am bound to say that, as far as they are concerned, they have only one object in view, and that is to secure the health and pleasure of the people of the immediate neighbourhood. But I never heard before of power being asked to purchase a piece of land for a Public Park, and, at the same time, to seek powers to allow four houses, occupying a space of two acres of the land, to remain in occupation for the long term of 21 years. These are the features of the Bill itself, as drawn up, to which I take exception, but which have been to a very considerable extent met by the promoters and partially erased from the measure. And now, Sir, with regard to the object of the proposal as a whole. We are asked to believe that this Public Park is a necessity for the poor of the neighbourhood. I have always been in favour of the protection of commons and of open spaces, and of increasing them wherever it is necessary and wherever it is possible. But we can scarely look upon this as a necessity at all. In the neighbourhood where this site is selected we find, from the Medical Officer's Return, that the population is only 47 to the acre — that is to say, that there are only 47 persons to the acre in the neighbourhood to which this Bill is to apply. In the Vauxhall district, I understand, there are less than 100 persons per acre, although, down in the lower parts of the parish—that is to say, in those parts nearer London—there is a population of 230 persons to the acre. Nevertheless, the Lambeth Vestry have never made any attempt, so far as I am aware, to preserve or acquire any open space for that part of the Parish of Lambeth which most stands in need of it. Within 20 minutes' walk of this site which the Lambeth Vestry propose, with the assent of the House, to purchase, there are two of the finest commons in the neighbourhood of London. There is Tooting Common, a common which for beauty cannot be excelled in the whole of the United Kingdom, and a resort of the utmost value for the purposes of health. There is also Clapham Common within 20 minutes' walk. Thus there are two commons within an easy walk of 20 minutes of this site. The parishioners are asked to consent to this scheme, which proposes to give upwards of £40,000 for 12 acres of land, three of which are already protected by an old Act of George III., and cannot possibly be built upon, while two acres are to remain in the possession of the present residents, or the Lambeth Vestry, for 21 years. They are asked to give more than £40,000 for this patch of land, which, after all, is only as it were a cover in the wall. There is no entrance to it at the back. It is merely an oblong piece of land running straight back from the road, and the only entrance to it is from the road. Under these circumstances, I think I am justified in expressing some doubt as to the manner in which this attempt to sell the land to the ratepayers has been brought about. [An hon. MEMBER: Hear, hear!] I am glad to find my hon. Friend present to support me. This piece of land was purchased by a member of the Vestry for about one-half of the price at which it is now proposed to sell it to the Vestry. A more beautiful family arrangement was scarcely ever heard of. The innocent Charity Commissioners, and the Metropolitan Board of Works, whose reputation is not of a very high pitch at this moment, are made parties to the transaction. [*Cries of* "Question!"] This is the Question, because the Metropolitan Board of Works has been, and must, if this Bill be passed, be a party to this transaction, and the hon. Gentleman has no right to call "Question!" in this instance. We are asked to purchase this land at nearly double the price at what it was originally sold. If the Lambeth Vestry are really desirous of promoting the health of the people by providing open spaces for them, why do they not do so in the neighbourhood where the inhabitants are 230 to the acre, instead of in the neighbourhood of Brixton Hill, which is an entirely open and healthy neighbourhood with two commons quite close, and a new park within easy reach in Camberwell? Why do not the Lambeth Vestry provide open spaces where they are more required, and why was it that the Lambeth Vestry did not constitute themselves the original purchasers of this plot of land, instead of allowing one of its members to purchase it, and then to re-sell it to the Vestry at a profit of £15,000 or £20,000? I do not propose to detain the House at any length in reference to the monstrous character of this proceeding; I will only remark that there has been a perfect mania in Lambeth of late for purchasing property. We have heard of another instance in which property has been also purchased by a member of the Vestry; indeed, the members of the Vestry appear to me to be chiefly land-jobbers who live in the neighbourhood and prowl about all night and all day gathering up every vacant spot of land they can set their eyes upon. When they have secured a piece, they suddenly find that the particular piece of land they have acquired is the exact spot where it is absolutely necessary to provide a public park or gardens for the residents on the right and left. The price required from the Vestry is generally about double that which has been given by the purchaser; but the proceeding is one which only requires a little management and arrangement between the mutual friends who are associated together in this institution. I feel that I should have been justified in using much stronger language in connection with some of these transactions than I care to do, out of respect and regard to the feelings of some of the gentlemen in the neighbourhood, who, I am sure, have never realized what they were committing themselves to when they gave large subscriptions towards the promotion of this Bill. Of course, I have been denounced for my opposition to the measure when it was first made known; but now I am receiving letters from Public Bodies in the neighbourhood, thanking me for what I have done, and saying that through my action a great injustice that would have been committed has been stopped, and, therefore, they and the ratepayers are indebted to me. Having made this statement, and relieved my conscience of the guilt which would have rested upon it if I had permitted this gross transaction to have passed unnoticed, I do not know that I will trouble the House to go to a Division on the second reading of the Bill. ["Oh!"] I have stated the reason why I shall not do so, and I think it is a very good reason. I sincerely hope that when the Bill reaches a Select Committee upstairs it will undergo a strict investigation; and it will be a question whether the measure, even as it now stands, should be allowed to pass without postponing it for another year in order to give the neighbourhood time to consider whether it is necessary or not to secure this site. I have no personal interest to serve in the matter. Indeed, my personal interest would rather be in favour of a public park and gardens, because I live close to this site. I may, however, say that although I am a ratepayer living within 100 yards of this property, I only ascertained by accident that this Bill was being promoted. If hon. Members will look at the Bill as it was originally introduced, and then at the mangled remains to which conscience and reason combined together have reduced the original draft, I think they will say there is some excuse for me in not troubling the House with a Division. If, however, any other hon. Member thinks proper to divide the House, I shall certainly go into the Lobby with him. I thank the House for having allowed me to make this statement in the interests of the ratepayers, and in denunciation of what I consider to be a most questionable transaction between some of the leading members of the Vestry and the Metropolitan Board of Works. I trust some explanation will be given of the action which the Metropolitan Board of Works have taken in regard to the Bill.

Mr. TATTON EGERTON (Cheshire, Knutsford): Equally with the hon. Member who has just sat down, I shall not propose to divide the House; but I hope the House will allow me to give one or two words of explanation in regard to the action of the Metropolitan Board of Works on this question. I think that any hon. Member who took up this Bill and looked at it with care would gather that the Metropolitan Board of Works was a party to the transaction. As a matter of fact, it is nothing of the sort. The Metropolitan Board, according to the wording of the Bill, are the promoters of the undertaking. The Bill specifies the Metropolitan Board or the Lambeth Vestry, or either of them. Now, the Metropolitan Board has never been consulted in any manner in regard to this Bill. Some member of the Metropolitan Board brought an application before the Board, urging the importance of securing this plot of ground, and was successful in getting permission from the Metropolitan Board to contribute a moiety of £1,000 per acre towards the formation of a public park. The Metropolitan Board, representing the Metropolis, have always done their best to secure open spaces for the public, and it was on that ground, and that ground alone, that they entertained the proposal made to them. They were pressed on every side, and the greatest pressure was brought to bear upon them to contribute a much larger sum; but they put their foot down, and said there was no precedent whatever for contributing more than £1,000 per acre. That is the sole position which the Metropolitan Board have taken in relation to the Bill, and they have, to their astonishment, found themselves posted as being the promoters of it. They had nothing whatever to do with it, and, on their behalf, I disclaim every connection with it, or with the second reading of the Bill.

Motion *agreed to*.

Bill read a second time, and *committed*.

QUESTIONS.

EGYPT—RED SEA LETTERS.

Mr. DILLWYN (Swansea, Town) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether Her Majesty's Government are aware that all letters going to and from Aghig in the South and Roweyah in the North of the Red Sea are opened by the officials at Suakin before being forwarded to their destination; and, if so, whether Her

Majesty's Government approve of such proceeding?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): We have no such information.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—LEASEHOLDERS.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland, What was the number of leaseholders who had entered the Land Courts up to the 29th of February last under the provisions of "The Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1887?"

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Madden) (Dublin University): The number of leaseholders who have applied to have fair rents fixed under the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1887, up to the 29th of February in the present year is 22,738, of whom 21,620 have applied to the Land Commission and 1,118 to the Civil Bill Courts. The number of leaseholders who have applied to be declared tenants of present tenancies under the 2nd section of the Act is, for the same period, 207.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked, whether the number of those who had applied to be present tenants mentioned in the latter portion of the hon. and learned Gentleman's answer applied to those who had not applied to have their rents fixed?

Mr. MADDEN: I am not quite certain whether they also applied to have their rents fixed or not.

ADULTERATION OF FOOD—AMERICAN CHEESE.

Mr. M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe) asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Whether his attention has been called to the large admixture of animal fat in the manufacture of American cheese, which enables the latter to be sold in this country as pure cheese at such prices as are injurious to the manufacture of pure cheese; and, whether he will instruct our American Consuls to inquire into, and report upon, the extent of this admixture, in order to give some reliable facts about it to the British public?

The SECRETARY to the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Long) (Wilts, Devizes) (who replied) said: The attention of the Agricultural Department has been called to this matter. The Departmental Statistical Inquiry Committee, which met in 1882, made some inquiry into the use of oleomargarine and lard in the manufacture of cheese in the United States, and the evidence of Dr. Voelcker was taken on the subject. The Foreign Office has been asked to obtain Reports from Consular officers in the United States as to the prevalence of this adulteration in the manufacture of cheese.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND)—EDUCATION RATES IN THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS.

Colonel MALCOLM (Argyllshire) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether the attention of the Government has been directed to the excessive pressure of the education rates in the Western parishes of the Highlands and Islands, amounting in some cases to 5*s*. 4*d*. in the £; whether they are aware that the proportion of the total cost of education borne by these parishes is 40 per cent as compared with 22 per cent over Scotland as a whole; and, whether they are now prepared by legislation, or otherwise, to give such substantial relief as was reported to be necessary by the Royal Commission in 1883?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): Her Majesty's Government are aware that the education rate presses severely in some Highland districts. As my hon. Friend does not specify the parishes, I am unable to say whether this percentage is correct or not; but in large districts it is believed to be as high as the figure he gives. This state of things is due, it is to be feared, to causes which might have been avoided. It must also be remembered that in these districts the school fees are, on an average, 10*s*. below that of the whole of Scotland. As regards relief, I may remind my hon. Friend that the Administration of 1884, after considering the Report of the Commission, by a Minute of the Education Department of April, 1885, conceded substantial benefits to these districts, but did not give effect to the other recommendations. Although that Minute has been most leniently administered, the defective enforcement of the Compulsory

Clauses has, in some cases, deprived School Boards of the full benefit. Her Majesty's Government are engaged in considering this matter most carefully; but it must be obvious to my hon. Friend that there are great difficulties in the way of extending the principle of exceptional dealing with special localities, both as regards the interests of the general community and the effects upon the localities themselves.

WAR OFFICE—THE ROYAL ARSENAL, WOOLWICH—THOMAS MAKEPEACE.

Mr. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is true that unskilled labourers have been employed in working the rifling machine for gun boring at the Royal Arsenal; and, whether, on Thomas Makepeace, a skilled workman, refusing to share the responsibility of such important work with an unskilled man, he was discharged from his employment and prevented from obtaining work in any other department of the Arsenal?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Unskilled labourers are not employed on the machines for rifling ordnance in the Royal Gun Factory. The man Makepeace was discharged for disobedience to orders, and became ineligible for a time for employment in the Ordnance Factories. I need not point out how important it is that discipline should be rigidly enforced in these factories.

BRITISH GUIANA—REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.

Mr. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) (for Mr. Watt) (Glasgow, Camlachie) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether the Government have received a Memorial from the inhabitants of the Colony of British Guiana, praying that a Representative Government may be given to them—

> "similar to that recently granted by Her Gracious Majesty to the inhabitants of other West Indian Colonies;"

and, whether the Government will favourably consider any proposals generally supported by the Colony in reference thereto?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): A Memorial has been received from certain inhabitants of the Colony, the prayer of which is in the terms stated in the hon. Member's Question. Her Majesty's Government consider that some amendment of the Constitution of the Colony is desirable; and when deciding as to the nature of such amendment they will take into consideration the representations of the Memorialists.

INLAND REVENUE—STAMP DUTY ON FOREIGN INVESTMENTS.

Mr. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) (for Mr. Watt) (Glasgow, Camlachie) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether his attention has been called to the fact of the large amount of Foreign investments which has been, and is, taking place from year to year, a large proportion of which appears to escape its fair share of taxation; and, whether he will consider the desirability of placing a tax upon such securities in the shape of a Stamp Duty?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The hon. Member refers, I presume, to the Foreign Securities which are transferred in this country without any Stamp Duty being charged on them. My attention has been directed to the subject; but, as I have said before in answer to similar Questions, I cannot anticipate my Budget Statement by saying what action, if any, I am going to take upon it.

In reply to a further Question by Mr. Howell,

Mr. GOSCHEN said, Foreign Securities issued in London did pay Stamp Duty; and it was an undoubted anomaly that Foreign Securities which were negotiable in London should not pay a Stamp Duty. The method of doing so was an exceedingly troublesome one to devise, and it was one about which he would not make any further statement until his Budget Speech.

POOR LAW—AUDITORS UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD.

Mr. W. H. JAMES (Gateshead) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether the auditors under the Local Government Board possess powers, and under what authority and Acts of Parliament, to issue orders to the officers of any Poor Law Union; if he will state the amount allowed per day to Inspectors and auditors of the Local Government Board, in addition to their travelling expenses; what is the amount allowed in their absence for home or official duties; what is their scale of travelling expenses; and, whether they are, in the matter of travelling expenses, allowed to charge cab hire where there is access by rail?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The district auditors have power under 7 & 8 *Vict.* c. 110 to require the attendance of persons at the audit, the production of accounts, and other matters connected with his audit. I infer from a newspaper report of the proceedings of the Gateshead Guardians that it was understood that the auditor had given directions to one of their relieving officers to attend at the schools to pay the school fees for pauper children. The auditor informs me that what he has done is this—he has objected to the production of receipts of pupil teachers for sums which were payable by the relieving officer to the head teachers for school fees; and he has stated that he would not be prepared in future to accept receipts which were not signed by the head teacher or by some one distinctly authorized by him to receive the amount. It devolves on the auditor to satisfy himself, for the purpose of his audit, as to the sufficiency of the receipts produced to him. The general Inspectors of the Board and auditors receive no allowance in respect of personal expenses except when absent from home at night on official business, and the allowance is then in the case of an Inspector 21*s*., and of an auditor 20*s*. There are some other Inspectors of the Board to whom a day allowance when not absent at night is made for personal expenses, and this allowance is 7*s*. when absent from home for not less than 10 hours. As regards travelling expenses, the actual expenses of locomotion are repaid. Charges are not made for cab hire when there is access by rail and the train service admits of the railway being used without inconvenience.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—SUB-POST OFFICE AT KNOCKATALLON.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he has received a Memorial on behalf of the inhabitants of Knockatallon, County Monaghan, praying for the establishment of a sub-post office; whether he is aware that Knockatallon is the centre of a thickly-populated district, and that Scotstown, which is the nearest post office, is four miles distant; and, whether he will provide a sub-post office in the district?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I have received an application for the establishment of a post office in Knockatallon; but I regret to say that the letters are too few in number to cover the cost of a post office. There is already a post to Knockatallon, and all available revenue was spent in increasing its frequency from three to five days in the week, and I will inquire whether this can be extended to six days.

ARMY—FIRST ARMY CORPS—HORSE AND FIELD BATTERIES.

CAPTAIN COTTON (Cheshire, Wirral) asked the Secretary of State for War, What is the present strength, as regards men and horses, of the Horse and Field Batteries in the First Army Corps, which he has stated are ready for mobilization; and, what is the additional number of men and horses necessary to raise those batteries to a war establishment?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The strength of the Horse and Field Batteries in the First Army Corps will be found in the Army Estimates, page 10. To bring a Horse Battery of the First Army Corps to war strength will require 17 men and 74 horses. To bring a Field Battery to war strength will require nine men and 52 horses. It may be interesting to the House to compare this with the French and German state of preparation. In Germany it requires 69 men and 151 horses to bring a Horse Artillery Battery to war strength, and 67 men and 105 horses for a Field Battery. In France a Horse Artillery Battery will not be complete without the addition of 74 men and 129 horses, nor a Field Battery without 66 men and 95 horses.

POST OFFICE, DUBLIN—SECOND-CLASS SORTERS.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the Postmaster General, with regard to the promotion of a second-class sorter over 28 seniors in Dublin, If the particular duty to be provided for was that of "time-keeper," officially called "book officer;" were any of the 28 second-class sorters who were passed over tested as to their qualifications; if not, how was it ascertained that not one of the second-class sorters senior to the one promoted was fully qualified; and, will he investigate this matter, and give an order to have some of the 28 seniors tested, and, at the same time, see that they suffer no annoyance at the hands of the persons who recommended the promoted officer?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I have inquired into the matter since the hon. Gentleman put his Question, and I find that he is quite right in saying that on a recent date 28 second-class sorters have been passed over. The particular duty to be provided for was that of "book officer." Of these 28 sorters not one was tested as to his qualifications for the post. When the post became vacant, candidates were invited to offer themselves; and of those who responded to the invitation the officer who was promoted was the senior. The others, though urged to come forward and try the duty, declined. I think the hon. Gentleman will see, under those circumstances, that the matter scarcely requires further investigation.

MR. T. M. HEALY: But if at any time there is any suspicion that politics and religion enter into these questions of promotion, will the right hon. Gentleman give such cases his special attention?

MR. RAIKES: Yes. I am always anxious to give special attention to any case to which my attention may be called.

CIVIL SERVICE—COPYISTS.

MR. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether Petitions have been received by the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury from three Civil Service copyists, whose promotion to the position of Lower Division clerk has been suspended; and, if so, whether, pending the consideration of their Petitions, they may be allowed to attend the examination shortly to be held, for the purpose of qualifying themselves, with the other copyists selected, for the position of Lower Division clerk?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): Petitions have been received from these three copyists, whose ages were mis-stated. The suggestion that they should be allowed to attend the qualifying examination amounts to a request that the mistake or misstatement should be overlooked, and that they should be given the benefit of it; and I see great difficulty in the way of assenting to such a course.

BULGARIA AND TURKEY—TREATY OF BERLIN—RECIPROCAL ENGAGEMENTS.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether, in case any of the Powers parties to the Treaty of Berlin press for the literal fulfilment of that Treaty in regard to Bulgaria, Her Majesty's Government will press for the fulfilment of Article XXIII. of the Treaty in regard to other parts of Turkey, so that, so far as the influence of this country avails, the part of the Treaty limiting the freedom of the people of Bulgaria may not be enforced while those parts which secure a measure of freedom to other parts of the country are wholly set at naught?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The Question is hypothetical; and it would be contrary to all precedent and convenience to answer it.

LOCAL TAXATION—PAUPER LUNATIC ASYLUMS—THE GOVERNMENT GRANT.

MR. ALLISON (Cumberland, Eskdale) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, looking to the fact that large numbers of aged imbeciles, who might with perfect safety and greater comfort to themselves be retained in union workhouses, are now, under the Regulations in force since 1874, in respect to the Grant of 4*s.* per head per week contributed by the Government, transferred to lunatic asylums at great cost to the ratepayers in the necessary enlargement of those asylums, he will consider the possibility of extending, under proper safeguards, the same grant to cases retained in workhouses, in the same way as is now the practice in Scotland?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): At present I can only say that the whole question of the Parliamentary grants in aid of local taxation is receiving the consideration of the Government in connection with the proposed Local Government Bill.

IRELAND — KILLARNEY — BOARD OF GUARDIANS—THE LANCASTER REGIMENT.

MR. HOOPER (Cork, S.E.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether a sum of £10 was awarded by the Killarney Board of Guardians to a number of men of the Lancaster Regiment, for their exertions in extinguishing a fire on the workhouse premises; and, whether this sum has been yet handed over to anyone on behalf of the regiment; and, if so, what steps, if any, have been taken to distribute the money?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. BRODRICK) (Surrey, Guildford) (who replied) said: The gratuity has been received by the officer commanding on behalf of the detachment employed at the fire. A portion has been applied to making good the damage to the men's clothing, and the balance is in course of distribution among the men concerned.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): Might I ask the Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, whether this expenditure of £10 by the Killarney Board of Guardians out of the rates is not an illegal expenditure, and should be surcharged; and, whether the proper parties to reward the men of the Lancaster Regiment would not be the Insurance Companies concerned?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) said, he could not now answer that Question.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—PROSECUTION OF MR. J. HOOPER, M.P. FOR SOUTH-EAST CORK—CAPTAIN STOKES, R.M.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, in the prosecution of the hon. Member for South-East Cork (Mr. Hooper) at Cork, 13 charges of publishing reports of suppressed branches of the National League were preferred against him; whether some of these publications occurred during the period that Captain Stokes acted temporarily as Divisional Resident Magistrate; and, if so, whether it was his duty to report to the Castle with reference to these publications; and, whether Captain Stokes subsequently adjudicated as Resident Magistrate at the trial of the hon. Member?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: It is a fact that there were 13 charges preferred against the hon. Member referred to of publishing reports of illegal meetings, on two of which he was convicted, the remainder being withdrawn by the Crown. Four of the publications occurred while Captain Stokes was acting as Divisional Magistrate. No Report of any kind was made by him to the Castle with reference to these publications; nor had he anything whatever to do with the papers connected with the trial, or with the institution of the prosecution. He was one of the magistrates who adjudicated at the trial.

MR. DILLON: Does what the right hon. and gallant Gentleman says of Captain Stokes apply only to the two cases on which the hon. Member for South-East Cork was convicted, and not to the remaining charges, which were withdrawn?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: I do not quite understand the hon. Member.

MR. DILLON: I wish to ask, whether this statement, that Captain Stokes had nothing whatever to do with the evidence, applies to all the 13 charges, or only to those two on which the hon. Member was convicted?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: I understand that Captain Stokes was not aware that any charges had been preferred against the hon. Member until the informations were brought to him to be sworn.

SCOTLAND — DESTITUTION IN THE WESTERN ISLANDS — SUPPLY OF SEED.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether Government will supply seed when necessary to the destitute peasantry in the Western Islands of Scotland on terms similar to those on which it has been decided to provide it to the inhabitants of Achill Island?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The attention of the Government has been given to the condition of the destitute persons in the Western Islands; and the Board of Supervision will take such steps as may appear to them to be necessary under the circumstances of the case.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — MR. JOHN BYRNE.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland, Did the Irish Lord Chancellor dismiss Mr. John Byrne, of Wallstown, Castle Mallow, from the Magistracy for sitting at Petty Sessions in Fermoy in his own County (Cork); if so, can he explain the practice of paid Magistrates sitting in more Petty Sessions districts than one, and even in more counties than one; and, why are unpaid Justices dismissed for doing the same thing which paid Magistrates constantly practice?

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN) (Dublin University): The case of Mr. Byrne is not at all analogous to that of a Resident Magistrate, who is paid to devote his whole time to the Public Service, and who is not appointed with reference to a single Petty Sessions district; but is bound to attend all Sessions in his jurisdiction, so far as time permits. As to the reasons which led the Lord Chancellor to take action in the case of Mr. Byrne, they fully appear in the correspondence which was published in the newspapers by Mr. Byrne.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I beg to give Notice that on the Vote on Account I will draw attention to the dismissal of unpaid Magistrates for going ten miles outside their destination; while paid Magistrates who received large sums from the country for travelling expenses, do the same thing, and are promoted accordingly.

Subsequently,

MR. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: May I ask the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General for Ireland, in reference to an answer that he has already given to the hon. and learned Member for North Longford, whether he sees any objection to lay on the Table the correspondence to which he has referred between the Lord Chancellor and Mr. John Byrne?

MR. MADDEN: The correspondence to which the right hon. Gentleman refers was, as I stated, published in the newspapers by Mr. John Byrne. With reference to laying it on the Table of the House, I do not like, on my own responsibility, to make any statement as to that. If the right hon. Gentleman will be good enough to put the Question on the Paper I shall be prepared to answer it.

LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)—BOYCOTTING IN GALWAY, &c.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Has police attention been called to the following statement, which appeared last month in *The Lincolnshire Chronicle*, a report of a meeting of the Primrose League at Lincoln, at which a man, describing himself as Robert Martin, of Galway, said—

> "Although he had been pursued by the National League, although he had been followed by their assassins, and had to be guarded by the police, he had stood on every Boycotted farm in Ireland, and had taken relief to the Boycotted men. Mentioning one case at New Ross, in Wexford, where, being unable to secure a vehicle on account of the Boycotting, he had to walk 11 miles with food for starving men, and when he got there he found them without water, as the National League had poisoned the wells;"

can it be ascertained what wells in or near New Ross were poisoned, and did Mr. Robert Martin report the poisoning to the local police at the time; if the outrage reported, as follows, in the Irish correspondence of *The Times* of the 20th of February took place:—

> "A witness, named Mick Sullivan, after giving evidence at the Coolmartin Assizes against Moonlighters, was so cruelly Boycotted that he was unable to obtain employment, and he has died for want of the necessaries of life;"

and, will the Government consider the feasibility of a measure to amend the Libel Laws, so that any inhabitant of a slandered community may have a cause of action, such as would lie if the same libel were published of a specific individual?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I have not seen the report of the meeting referred to. The local constabulary have no knowledge of the matter referred to in the second paragraph. With regard to the third paragraph, I beg to refer the hon. and learned Member to the reply to a Question on this subject by the hon. Member for East Kerry (Mr. Sheehan) on the 28th of February last.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Will the right hon. and gallant Gentleman say that both the statements in *The Times* and *The Lincolnshire Chronicle* are lies?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: No; I have not seen the report, and I do not know anything about it.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Will the right hon. and gallant Gentleman be good enough to answer the last portion of my Question?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: I do not believe the Government have any intention to bring in a measure to amend the Law of Libel. If they did it would, perhaps, seriously affect some newspapers with which the hon. and learned Gentleman is acquainted.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION — FAIR RENTS, CO. LIMERICK.

MR. FINUCANE (Limerick, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, When will the Land Commission sit in Limerick to hear the numerous originating notices to fix fair rents served by the leaseholders of Limerick; whether, if in the meantime the landlords insist on the tenants paying the original rents, the Government will aid the former in any evictions which take place; and, whether the Government will afford adequate means to have the legislative enactments made for protection of the tenants administered in seasonable time?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Land Commissioners inform me that a sitting of a Sub-Commission has been fixed for the County Limerick on April 4. The Government are bound to afford the assistance of the forces of the Crown to enable a Sheriff to execute writs and decrees of a Court of Law, whether of ejectment or otherwise. As has been already stated in the House, every effort is being made to expedite the hearing of the large influx of cases through the operation of the Land Act of last Session, and the Irish Government are at present in communication with the Treasury on the subject.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—APPEALS FROM LANDLORDS.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Land Commissioners have yet arranged to hear the 403 appeals, lodged by landlords, in the County Monaghan, against the decisions, fixing a fair rent, of the Sub-Commissioners, at a place that will be convenient to the tenants interested; and, whether he can state when they will be heard?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Land Commissioners inform me they have not yet arranged to hear the appeals lodged by landlords in County Monaghan, nor can they at present state the date upon which they will be heard. They will, however, give due notice when the arrangements have been completed.

INDIA—THE CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS—CONDEMNATION BY THE BISHOPS.

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether he is aware that in the late Conference of the Bishops of the Church of England in India and Ceylon held in Calcutta at the end of January last, under the Presidency of the Metropolitan of India, a Resolution was unanimously passed condemning the Contagious Diseases Acts in India; whether the following sentence occurs in that Resolution—

> "We believe that the Contagious Diseases Acts not only fail to produce the beneficial results anticipated, but expose the authorities to the suspicion of treating incontinency as a necessary evil, and of directly encouraging an immoral trade;"

and, whether a copy of this Resolution is in the hands of the India Office; and, if not, whether he will take steps to obtain a copy?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.) (who replied) said: No Report of the Conference, or of the Resolution, has been received at the India Office. For the reasons stated on Thursday last, the Secretary of State considers it unnecessary to take steps to procure one.

LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)—WOODFORD—RELEASE OF MR. BLUNT.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether in Woodford, on Tuesday, the 6th of March, the people who had assembled to celebrate the release of Mr. Blunt were ordered to disperse by the police; whether the police threatened to charge the people; and, whether the people were orderly and peaceable; and, if so, under what law the police act?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Inspector General of Constabulary reports that the people had assembled and held a meeting in the public street, at which speeches were being made. The sergeant, who was with three constables, informed the people that he could not permit this obstruction; but did not threaten to charge them. The people soon afterwards dispersed.

MR. DILLON: Will the right hon. and gallant Gentleman say under what law the police acted when there was no obstruction?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: Under the ordinary law, by which the police are required to prevent obstruction of the public thoroughfare.

EVICTIONS (IRELAND)—MR. THOMAS MORONEY.

MR. FINUCANE (Limerick, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Mr. Thomas Moroney, who has been now imprisoned for over 14 months for contempt of Court, was the owner of the fair green of Herbertstown, from which he has been evicted within the past fortnight; whether, during his imprisonment, he has received the tolls of all the fairs held in Herbertstown; whether any communication has been recently made to him, either by the Government or those responsible for his detention, that if he promised not to interfere with The O'Grady, his late landlord, in the collection of the tolls, that he would be liberated immediately; and, whether Mr. Edmund Ryan, P.L.G., of Askerline, County Limerick, who was committed for contempt of Court, was liberated after 12 months; and, if so, what is the reason for the diversity of treatment to both prisoners?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: As already explained, in reply to a former Question, Thomas Moroney was not committed for contempt of Court, but for refusing to be sworn and give evidence in the Bankruptcy Court, as required by the 385th section of the Bankruptcy Act of 1857. The fair green is part of the holding which was rented by Moroney, who as tenant used to receive the tolls collected at the fairs held on the green from which he has been evicted. During his imprisonment the tolls have been collected by strangers, who, it is believed, have paid them over to his wife. No such representation as that indicated in the third paragraph has been made to Moroney. Edward Ryan's case was entirely different from that of Moroney. Ryan was committed for contempt of Court, and was liberated on the expiration of the period prescribed by law.

LOTTERIES ACT—THE CHURCH CONSERVATIVE CLUB.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the fact that the Church Conservative Club is raising money by lottery to reduce the debt on the club premises, and that many thousand tickets have been issued for such lottery, announced to be drawn on Primrose Day, 19th April; whether the prizes include cigars; whether the club is licensed to sell tobacco; and, what action he proposes to take in the matter?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I have seen a notice of the proposed lottery, from which it appears that the prizes include cigars. I have called the attention of the Public Prosecutor and of the Board of Inland Revenue to the matter.

CUSTOMS HOUSE—STATISTICAL DEPARTMENT—PROMOTION OF WRITERS.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the writers in the Statistical Department of the Customs House are performing, and have for many years performed, at a remuneration of 10*d.* per hour, duties similar to those discharged by the Redundant and Lower Division clerks in that Department; whether the late Principal of the Department described the work as "book-keeping of a high class;" and, whether these writers, or any of them, have been recommended for promotion to the Lower Division under the provisions of the Treasury Minute of December, 1886; and, if so, when such recommendation will be carried into effect?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) Leeds, N.): A Departmental Committee which recently inquired into the work performed in the Statistical Department of the Customs came to the conclusion that there is not much difference between the work of many of the Lower Division clerks and that of many of the copyists in the branch, but that this work was not of such a character as might be required from the Lower Division. I have no knowledge of any such statement as that attributed to the late Principal. The Board of Customs have recommended certain copyists for promotion to the Lower Division; but the Committee thought the case could best be met by some special rates of pay. The question how best to deal with them is now before the Treasury.

INDIA—THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION.

SIR ROPER LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether the appointment of the Public Service Commission was stated by the Government of India to be preparatory to a further inquiry into Indian affairs; what has been the total cost of that Commission, including the salaries of its official members; how many officers of the Covenanted Civil Service, how many officers of the special or technical departments of the Civil Service, and how many European officers of other uncovenanted departments had seats on that Commission; and, whether Her Majesty's Government intend to initiate legislation on the recommendations of that Commission, without further independent inquiry?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.) (who replied) said: (1) My answer to the first paragraph of the Question is "Yes;" (2) the cost cannot be ascertained from information at present in the India Office; (3) the Commission was composed of six Covenanted Civil servants—two High Court Judges (one a native), and five natives; and two unofficial persons; (4) the Secretary of State will take no action on the Report of the Commission till he has received the views of the Government of India, by whom it is now being considered.

THE ESTIMATES—REVENUE DEPARTMENT—WARRINGTON COMMISSIONERS OF INCOME TAX.

MR. CALEB WRIGHT (Lancashire, S.W., Leigh) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether any portion of the £200 in the item of £3,650 mentioned in the Estimates, Revenue Department, page 43, has been incurred by the Warrington Commissioners of Income Tax, in providing an additional place in the Leigh Parliamentary Division; if not, will a place be provided in Leigh Division, where there is a population of 54,000 within a radius of three and a-half miles from Leigh market place; and, whether all appeals at present have to be heard at Newton, a distance of 10 miles, or at Warrington, a distance of 14 miles?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.) (who replied) said: Leigh is one of the places for which expenses of appeal meetings could be defrayed under the item referred to. It is the duty of the District Commissioners to decide at what places in their Division appeals can most conveniently be held; and the Government would not be justified in dictating to those Commissioners on such a matter. I understand, however, that the Warrington Commissioners decided last year to hold appeal meetings at Leigh in those years in which new Income Tax assessments under Schedules A and B are made, as will be the case next year.

NATIONAL DEBT (CONVERSION) BILL—THE BONUS.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether the bonus to be given to the holders of Consols and Reduced who accept the new Stock should be treated as capital or interest?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): There is a good deal to be said on both sides, both for treating this 5*s.* as capital and also for treating it as income; but the Government have received such numerous representations, mainly from Trustees, explaining the great inconvenience there would be if there were any doubt about the matter, and in investing such very small sums as 5*s.* per £100 would occasionally amount to, that they have decided to introduce a clause in Committee authorizing Trustees to treat the 5*s.* bonus on Consols and Reduced Threes as income.

INDIA (EXPENDITURE)—THE NORTH-WESTERN FRONTIER.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, What has been the expenditure from the Indian Exchequer during the last three years on frontier railways and military works on the North-Western Frontier?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.) (who replied) said: From the information now in the India Office, R.x.8,500,000 is the best estimate that can at present be made. This must not, however, be relied on as absolutely accurate.

TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANKS ACT, 1887—CARDIFF TRUSTEES' SAVINGS BANK—REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he will explain to the House the cause of the delay in the publication of the Report and Evidence of the Commissioner, appointed under the Act of last Session to inquire into the circumstances connected with the defalcations which occurred in connection with the Cardiff Trustees' Savings Bank, and the conduct of the Trustees and Managers in respect thereto; and, whether he can inform the House when the Report, issued in December last, together with the Evidence, will be issued to Members?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square), in reply, said, he hoped the Report would be in the hands of Members on Thursday.

ENDOWED SCHOOLS ACT, 1869—RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, Whether he can inform the House what steps are being taken to carry out the recommendations of the Select Committee on the Endowed Schools Acts, 1869, and the amending Acts; and, whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill this Session to give effect to such recommendations?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE) (Kent, Dartford): The carrying out of some of the most important recommendations of the Committee to which the hon. Member refers, must depend upon the results of the forthcoming legislation in regard to local government and technical education. The Commissioners also stated in their Report, just laid on the Table, that they are prepared to call to their aid, in the future formation of schemes, the suggestions contained in the Report of the Committee, with a view to making their schemes more generally acceptable. Under these circumstances, Her Majesty's Government do not intend to propose legislation during this Session. I may add that, in deference to one important suggestion in the Report, the Commissioners have commenced a systematic inquiry in various parts of the country into the working of schemes formed under the Acts.

POST OFFICE—DEDUCTION OF PAY AT GLASGOW AND MANCHESTER.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) asked the Postmaster General, Whether the Government is prepared to withdraw the exceptional advantages of post officials at Manchester and other places, as regards the deduction of only one-third of the pay in respect of sickness, or whether the Government is prepared to place the post officials of Glasgow and elsewhere, where at present the deduction is one half, on a footing of equality with Manchester?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): No, Sir; it would, I think inflict an undeserved hardship on a body of meritorious public servants if I were to withdraw the advantage from Manchester. But I do not see my way to extend it to Glasgow or other offices where it does not exist already.

POST OFFICE—UNIFORM OF FIRST-CLASS POSTMEN.

Mr. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) asked the Postmaster General, Whether the Government is prepared to put the first-class postmen of Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, and other cities, on an equal footing, as regards Post Office uniform, with the first-class postmen of London, Edinburgh, and Dublin?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): No, Sir; I am not prepared at present to recommend any exceptions to the general arrangement described in my answer to the hon. Member on the 8th instant.

INDIA—REVENUE FROM INTOXICATING LIQUORS.

Mr. CAINE (Barrow-in-Furness) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, What is the total Revenue derived from intoxicating liquors in British India for the years 1884-5, 1885-6, 1886-7, and also the number of prosecutions for illicit distillation throughout British India for each year since 1871-2?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.) (who replied) said: The Revenue was, in 1884-5—Customs, R.x.401,000; Excise, R.x.2,803,000; total, R.x.3,204,000; in 1885-6—Customs, R.x.417,000; Excise, R.x.2,923,000—total, R.x.3,340,000 The Returns for 1886-7 have not yet been received. The second Question cannot be answered from information in the India Office, Excise offences being all lumped together in the Returns.

WAR OFFICE—CHAPLAIN GENERAL TO THE FORCES—VICARAGE OF ST. PETER AD VINCULA (TOWER OF LONDON).

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether the Chaplain General to the Forces has been appointed by the Government to the Vicarage of St. Peter ad Vincula, in the Tower of London, the duties of which are discharged by a curate; and, whether such curate is a fourth class Army Chaplain on probation, whose salary and residence are provided out of the Army Votes; and, if so, what is the reason for an arrangement by which the Chaplain General holds a sinecure office, and the cost of discharging his duties is borne by the taxpayers?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The Chaplain General has for the last year held the appointment of Chaplain to the Tower of London, for which he receives £150 a-year, as stated in Army Estimates. With the chaplaincy goes the Vicarage of St. Peter ad Vincula; but the latter has no pecuniary value. The Chaplain General does occasional duty as Vicar; but the Chaplain to the Forces, who is in daily attendance on the troops, has the residence and acts as Curate of St. Peter's. His duties are not confined to the troops at the Tower.

THE METROPOLITAN MAGISTRACY—ALTERATIONS OF MAGISTERIAL DISTRICTS.

Mr. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether a Committee was appointed some time back to report on certain alterations in the Magisterial Districts of the Metropolis, and the number of days in the week magistrates were required to attend their Courts; and, did the Committee make any Report before the issuing of the Order in Council with reference to new Courts at Wandsworth and Dalston; and, if so, will he state the terms of that Report and the names of the Committee?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): Two Departmental Committees have been appointed, in 1881 and 1887 respectively. The former recommended the establishment of a new Court at Dalston; the latter considered whether the Dalston Court and a whole-day Court at Hammersmith and Wandsworth could be provided for without any addition to the existing magisterial strength, over and beyond that already sanctioned for the new Court at Dalston. This Committee reported in August, 1887, and suggested that four of the Courts should be worked in pairs, with three magistrates instead of four to each pair. The Committee consisted of Mr. Stuart-Wortley, who presided, Sir James Ingham, the Receiver for the Metropolitan Police District, and Mr. Bruce, one of the Assistant Commissioners of Police.

THE MARGARINE ACT—REDUCTION OF FINES (IRELAND).

MR. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What were the names of the two persons whose fines of £10 each for offences against the Margarine Act were reduced to £2 each by the Lord Lieutenant on Memorial; what was the date on which the original fines were imposed by the police magistrate; and, if any other Memorials have been received by the Lord Lieutenant praying to reduce fines under the same Act?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, he had received such short Notice of the Question that he must ask the hon. Member to give him a little more time.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): It was down yesterday. It is practically a repetition of the Question of yesterday.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: Oh, no; there are three different points in it which were not in yesterday's Question at all.

WAR DEPARTMENT—STORES, &c.—IRISH CEMENT.

MR. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether, although cement for War Department works is supplied subject to conditions to comply with certain tests, it is, as a matter of fact, constantly used without the specified tests being actually carried out, the character of the manufacturer, with, perhaps, occasional tests, being considered a sufficient guarantee; whether he is aware that, with this knowledge, builders prefer buying from well-known rather than newly-established makers; and, whether, with a view to encouraging a struggling effort to establish cement manufacture in Ireland, he will direct the Engineer Department in Dublin to have some tests made of Irish cement in the presence of the manufacturers' agents?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. BRODRICK) (Surrey, Guildford) (who replied) said: The facts are, no doubt, as stated in the hon. Member's Question. The War Department does not desire to fetter in any way a contractor's discretion as to where he procures his cement; and it would, therefore, be contrary to the Rule to test any cement except that which the contractor tenders for actual use.

SEED SUPPLY (IRELAND) ACT, 1880—NON-PAYMENT OF THE RATE.

MR. HAYDEN (Leitrim, S.) asked Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland, Whether the non-payment of seed rate disqualifies a ratepayer from voting at a Poor Law election?

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN) (Dublin University) (in reply) said, the seed rate being placed in the same position as the poor rate, its non-payment disqualified a ratepayer from voting at an ordinary Poor Law election.

MR. HAYDEN: Even though the poor rate is paid?

MR. MADDEN: Yes; certainly.

WAR DEPARTMENT (STORES, &c.)—SALE OF DISUSED ACCOUTREMENTS, &c.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he is aware that a considerable portion of the disused accoutrements and clothing of the Army annually sold at Woolwich consists of articles which have, in many instances, been used very little, and in many others not used at all; whether such stores are brought up to Woolwich from all the depôts in the country, instead of being disposed of on the spot to local purchasers; whether, when brought to Woolwich, they are put up for sale in very large quantities, with the effect of reducing the number of possible purchasers to a small ring of Jewish firms; and, whether, on the ground that such a rings exists, the contracts for the purchase of such stores are given without any open competition whatever?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. BRODRICK) (Surrey, Guildford) (who replied) said:

As regards clothing, commanding officers are responsible that none is sold which has not been worn for the regulated time. It is sold in the districts where it is discarded. As to accoutrements, none are sold which can be made available for service, except occasionally obsolete patterns, which would be inapplicable to our troops. Before sale they are broken up, and the brass ornaments, &c., removed, so that practically it is only the old leather which is sold. All stores of this sort are brought up to Woolwich to be examined before they are parted with. It is under consideration whether steps cannot be taken to increase the competition at these sales, and to bring the ultimate consumers into more direct contact with the War Department.

INDIA—THE TREATY OF GANDAMUK.

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether any, and what, alteration has been made in the relations of the Indian Government to the districts of Kurram, Pishin, and Sibi, as fixed by the Treaty of Gandamuk?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.) (who replied) said: By the Treaty of Gandamuk, entered into with the Ameer Yakoob Khan on May 26, 1879, the districts of Pishin and Sibi were assigned to the British Government, and their Revenues, after deducting the charges of the Civil administration, were to be paid over to the Ameer. But in consequence of the massacre of the English Mission at Cabul, on September 3, 1879, followed by the abdication of Yakoob Khan, the districts in question remained in British occupation; and in 1887 it was found necessary, for administrative purposes, that they should be formally incorporated into the Indian Empire. They are included under the administration of the Chief Commissioner of British Beloochistan. When the Kurram Valley was evacuated by the British troops in 1880, the district was handed over to the independent control of the Turri tribes. (1881, C. 2,776, p. 103).

INLAND REVENUE — EXEMPTION — CARRIAGE TAX (IRELAND).

MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If he can explain why the people who keep carriages in Ireland should be exempt from the Carriage Tax; and, whether, in the changes and modifications which he has promised to make in the incidence of the tax, he will levy the impost upon the keepers of such vehicles in all parts of the United Kingdom.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): Yes, Sir; this exemption does exist, and has existed since 1823, when the then tax on carriages in Ireland was repealed, I understand, because it did not pay the cost of collection. In reviewing the taxation of the country since that date, the fact that Ireland does not pay this duty has always been taken into consideration; and it has been felt that its re-imposition in Ireland without some equivalent step in Great Britain would be an unfair addition to the taxation of Ireland.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) hoped the right hon. Gentleman, before bringing in his Budget, would take into consideration similar circumstances with regard to Scotland.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887 — STATE OF CO. FERMANAGH.

MR. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If his attention has been drawn to the following passage in the address of Mr. Justice Andrews to the Grand Jury of County Fermanagh—

> "Gentlemen of the Grand Jury of the County Fermanagh, it is gratifying to find that there are only four cases to go before you; none of them will keep you any considerable time, and if you would investigate one small bill, and take up the perjury bill, it will greatly facilitate the business. From the character of the bills to go before you, and from the information I have received from officials since I came to the town, I am happy to find that your county is in an orderly state, and it gives me great pleasure to congratulate you on it;"

and, whether the Government intend to continue the proclamation of Fermanagh under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, considering the highly peaceable state of the county?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, he had seen the newspaper report of the Judge's Charge referred to. The Government did intend to continue the proclamation in question. It was only Sub-section 3, Section 2 of the Act. That was unusual in Ireland; and the grounds upon which the Government acted were explained in answer to Questions put on the 25th of July, 1887, and the effect of their action was to assimilate the law of Ireland to that of England.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—ALLEGED FIRING ON THE PERSON, CO. MAYO.

MR. CRILLY (Mayo, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Mr. Edward O'Reilly, who is Petty Sessions Clerk of Ballaghadereen, County Mayo, asserted that he had been fired at in the townland of Barnaboy on the 18th of December last; whether, in consequence of this assertion, two respectable young men, named John Stenson and Michael Towey, were forced out of their beds on the morning of the 19th of December, and conveyed as prisoners into the town of Ballaghadereen; whether, upon this case being heard at the Petty Sessions Court in Ballaghadereen, the magistrates dismissed it; and, whether, in view of this false charge made against these two innocent young men, and the subsequent refusal of O'Reilly to appear and sustain in Ballyhaunis other criminal charges brought by him against the people in the neighbourhood of Ballaghadereen, the Government will retain him in the office of Petty Sessions Clerk for Ballaghadereen?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, it appeared that Mr. O'Reilly did say that he had been fired at by the men named in the Question. They were arrested on the 19th of December and brought before a magistrate, who admitted them to bail. They were then tried at the Petty Sessions, when the men admitted having fired shots as Mr. O'Reilly passed, but that they did not fire at him. The magistrates, after hearing the case, refused informations. The matter had been fully inquired into by the Registrar of Petty Sessions clerks, and he had not found that there was any ground for charging Mr. O'Reilly with perjury. As regarded the last paragraph, it appeared that Mr. O'Reilly was prevented from prosecuting at the last Ballyhaunis Presentment Sessions a claim for malicious injury to his cattle, owing to the fact that his claim was not lodged in sufficient time. He, however, intended to appear at the Presentment Sessions in May.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARIES ACT, 1887—WARWICKSHIRE.

MR. DUGDALE (Warwickshire, Nuneaton) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether it is the fact that Mr. Chambers, Assistant Boundary Commissioner for Warwickshire, under "The Local Government Boundaries Act, 1887," has intimated his intention to hold an inquiry at Birmingham on the 11th proximo,

> "With a view to ascertain the facts and to hear the wishes of the Public Bodies whose work and jurisdiction may possibly be affected by changes hereafter to be accomplished under the provisions of the Act;"

whether, with a view to their immediate discussion by the ratepayers, and to the saving of expense in connection with the holding of such an inquiry, the Boundary Commissioners will at once formulate, and send to the Public Bodies interested, the changes which they are prepared to recommend or desire to have discussed; whether any alteration of the municipal boundaries of the Borough of Birmingham is still proposed, notwithstanding the communications which have recently taken place on the subject between the Boundary Commissioners and the Clerk of the Peace for Warwickshire; and, whether the Boundary Commissioners will direct Mr. Chambers not to entertain the above question at his inquiry, so that the Public Bodies interested may be saved the expense which they would otherwise have to incur in resisting such a proposal?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's), in reply, said, that in the opinion of the Local Government Board and the draftsmen who prepared the Boundaries Act, it was not within the power of the Boundary Commissioners to propose any alteration in the municipal boundaries of Birmingham,

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS — THE UNION STEAMSHIP COMPANY—SIR ALFRED SLADE.

MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the Union Steamship Company have a contract with the Government; and, whether Sir Alfred Slade, Receiver General of Inland Revenue, is a Director of the Company?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am informed that the Union Steamship Company has no contract with Her Majesty's Government. Sir Alfred Slade is a Director of that Company.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—APPOINTMENT OF REGISTRARS OF SUB-COMMISSIONS.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, In whom is the appointment of Registrars of Irish Land Sub-Commissions vested; whether he is aware of any instances or occasions in which the Land Commissioners (and suitors in their Courts) have had cause for dissatisfaction with the want of efficiency displayed by any of their Sub-Registrars, who were appointed from the open market without having had previous experience of Land Commission business; whether it would be possible for the Land Commissioners, if future appointments become necessary, to make some temporary arrangement whereby the duties of Sub-Commission Registrars could be performed by members of their own staff who are acquainted with such duties, and who, from their continued connection with the office, might be expected to discharge the functions of Sub-Registrars in the country with satisfaction to the Chief Commissioners; whether clerks on the staff of the Commission have, by reason of their past services, a prior claim to any increased emolument that might arise out of their temporary employment as Sub-Registrars; and, whether he will consider the expediency of having some alteration made in the present mode of selection of Sub-Registrars, whereby an efficient performance of their duties, which is of such importance to the public, can be guaranteed?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The appointment of Registrars to Sub-Commissioners is vested, by the Act of 1881, in the Irish Land Commissioners. The Commissioners have not had occasion, except in one instance, to feel or express dissatisfaction with the performance of his duties by any Sub-Registrar, nor are they aware that suitors have, in any case, expressed such dissatisfaction. All the present Sub-Registrars are men who have had long experience in their business. Whenever a temporary arrangement for the discharge of a Sub-Registrar's duties becomes necessary it is the practice of the Commissioners to make provision for it by means of a person already on the staff of the Department. As to future appointments to the office, the Commissioners will continue to exercise the discretion vested in them according to their judgment.

INLAND REVENUE—CIVIL SERVANTS AND POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the only rule promulgated and known to the Inland Revenue, relating to participation in political matters, is that contained in the General Instructions to Officers of the Inland Revenue, page 141—namely, that

> "No person in the Service shall be a Member of any Political Association, nor take an active part in canvassing, or serve on committees at elections of Members of Parliament;"

whether there is any Rule, and, if so, what, and where, and how promulgated, against any officer of the Inland Revenue "taking part in or speaking at any public political meeting;" and, whether the Primrose League is a Political Association within the meaning of the Rule quoted?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The Rule in force in the Inland Revenue Service is correctly quoted; but it is well understood in the Inland Revenue Service that officers engaged in such duties as assessing or charging taxes or Excise duties are bound to refrain from public speaking and controversies on political matters, which might lay them open to accusations of favouritism in assessing the duties on taxpayers with whom they have officially to deal. The good sense of the Inland Revenue Service has hitherto recognized the reasonableness of the Rules in force; and very few cases have been brought to the notice of the Commissioners in which, by overt acts, officers have committed a breach of them, either in letter or spirit. The Primrose League is a Political Association within the meaning of the Rule.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Why is Sir Alfred Slade exempted from the operation of this Rule?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I stated, on a former occasion, that he is not exempted from its operation at all.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR asked the right hon. Gentleman, whether it is a fact that a recent public political meeting held in Dublin, attended and addressed by the right hon. Member for Rossendale and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the following members of the Civil Service also attended and occupied prominent seats on the platform:—namely, General Sankey, Chief Commissioner of Works; Mr. Roberts, Junior Commissioner; and Mr. Soady, Secretary to the Board of Works; and, whether the General Rules of the Service, as to attending and taking part in public political meetings, extends to these gentlemen?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: The gentlemen named did attend the public meeting referred to; but they did so in their private capacity, and took no part whatever in the proceedings. The General Rules of the Civil Service extend to all permanent members of that Body.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR said, that, as a consequence of the answers of the right hon. Gentleman to his two last Questions, he wished to know whether he still said that the Rules with regard to Political Associations were the same for all branches and officers of the Public Service?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: Most certainly, Sir.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Was it in his private capacity that Mr. Browning, the Solicitor to the Land Commission, signed the address to the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale and the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and if the right hon. Gentleman is aware whether a similar manifestation of political opinion in the case of other gentlemen connected with the Land Commission led to those gentlemen being summarily dismissed owing to their attitude?

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, he had not had Notice of the Question, and he was not aware of anything of the kind to which the hon. Gentleman referred having taken place.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said, he would give Notice of a Question on that subject.

LONDON COAL AND WINE DUTIES CONTINUANCE.

Mr. BURT (Morpeth) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether there is any truth in the statement made in *The Observer*, of the 11th instant, to the effect that the

> "Government will not resist a proposal to renew the Coal and Wine Dues for one year, pending changes in the local government of the Metropolis?"

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H Smith) (Strand, Westminster): My attention was first called to the statement alluded to by the Question of the hon. Member. There is no foundation for the suggestion that the Government have, in the slightest degree, departed from the attitude they took on this question in 1886 and 1887.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1881.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, If he can now give us some idea when it is intended by the Government to bring in a Bill to renew the powers in reference to the Land Commission under the Land Law (Ireland) Act of 1881, which will expire in August next?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I am not now able to make any statement on the subject; but I will do so in a very short time.

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION (SPECIAL REPORT).

Sir JOHN MOWBRAY *reported* from the Committee of Selection; That they had selected the following Six Members to be the Chairman's Panel, and to serve as Chairmen of the two Standing Committees to be appointed under the Standing Order of the 7th March:—Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Sir Henry James, Mr. Osborne Morgan, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Sir Matthew White Ridley, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson.

Ordered, That the Report do lie upon the Table.

MOTIONS.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA (FRONTIER POLICY).—RESOLUTION.

MR. SLAGG (Burnley), in rising to move—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the unwise Frontier Policy of the Government of India is producing grave financial difficulties in that country, leading not only to increased burdens of taxation, but to the extension of the sale of intoxicating liquors for Revenue purposes, with serious results to the moral and material welfare of the people,"

said, at the outset of his remarks, he disclaimed any intention to attack either the motives or the political character of the men responsible for the Indian policy which he wished to criticize. He was fully alive to the fact that we owed very much to the able Gentlemen who, both in India and in this country, conducted the difficult affairs of the government of India, and of the extreme difference which existed between the representative institutions of a country like England and the despotic or semi-despotic methods which, at any rate for a time, must prevail in a country such as India. It was the system of government which in a large measure characterized our administration in India, and not the persons who conducted that system, that he should venture in some measure to criticize. He was aware that a large section of the community held the opinion that our system of government in India could not possibly be improved; and they accepted all the assertions of Indian officials that the system was, in fact, one of the best and wisest the world had ever produced. It was no wonder, when such opinions prevailed, supported by such authority, that the people of this country were apt to be beguiled into holding the same idea, more especially when many officials were inclined to speak of those who ventured to criticize the acts of the Government as guilty almost of impertinence. These ideas existing, he did not wonder the public were lulled into acquiescence. How was it, he asked, that the people at large, and also Members of the House of Commons, accepted so easily and readily all the dulcet assurances presented to them in relation to our affairs in India? The answer was that we were never called upon to pay any part of the cost for the acts done in our name in India. The policy was ours, but the cost fell elsewhere—namely, on the well-filled coffers of the opulent Indian ryot. If the British taxpayers were called upon to pay the cost of the Acts in policy he virtually sanctioned there would be no more calm admissions of ignorance or indifference as to Indian affairs, and no more absolute surrender of them into the hands of delegated authorities, who, however competent and able they might be—and he admitted they were both—were, like all other Administrations in the world, ever so much better for the watchful supervision of an intelligent public opinion. For instance, the loss arising from the difference in exchange was the inevitable outcome of our Indian Frontier policy and wasteful expenditure. The pursuit of that policy had led to the increase of the cost of our standing Army by more than £2,000,000 a-year. If we in this country, who were responsible for Indian policy, and had to pay the cost, or even a share of the cost, of the acts done in our name there would be a marvellous awakening in the country at large as to our responsibilities. We should hear of less unforeseen deficits, of costly and reckless wars, of wild never-ending and ever-changing schemes of frontier defence, and of unjust annexations, got up for the presumed purpose of extending that trade which we were, in fact, doing much to encumber in our existing territory. If we were so responsible, even that never-failing sheet-anchor of the Indian deficit-monger—loss by exchange—would in whole or in great part disappear. In the short review which he would offer to the House of the position of Indian finance at the present time, he could not refrain from referring to the deplorable complexity of the accounts of India. It was, indeed, a disheartening task to endeavour to make head or tail of them. That extreme complication lent itself to a plan which was very often adopted in that House by those who were responsible for India—the plan of throwing a barrow-full of figures upon the floor of the House towards the end of a debate, at a time and under circumstances which made it impossible for them to be discussed. When complaints were made about extravagance in connection with Indian finance, they were given in answer a list of items upon which the expenditure had been made; but that was not an answer to the complaint. They knew perfectly well that Debt and an inflated expenditure were the result of military charges, costly annexations, railways which would never pay, and wild schemes of defence. They knew also that the loss on exchange was the outcome of many of those things. The question he desired an answer to was—has the money been wisely spent, and have we got value for our money? They might suppose, from the way in which enormous expenditure in India was defended, that they got value for money in every case—that there were very valuable assets for the outlay which had been made. He ventured to think that he could show that the reverse was the case. He could undertake to show that not one single Department of business conducted by the Indian Government made any profit whatever. On the contrary, enormous losses were made — losses amounting to £2,500,000 were the results of the business efforts of the Government in India. When Indian expenditure was defended in that House, he had noticed for years back that one item was brought forward with extreme satisfaction. That was the item of £75,000,000 represented by reproductive public works. But the misfortune was that that money had not been expended on reproductive works in the ordinary business sense of the term. It had been expended upon works which might have been reproductive, and which ought to be reproductive, but which, as a matter of fact, occasioned a loss to the taxpayers of India. He found that the State railways entailed a loss of £200,000 per annum; the guaranteed railways a loss of £800,000; and irrigation works a loss of £700,000. If they added to those sums the interest on money deposited with Railway Companies, £500,000, it would be seen that the loss on those works amounted to over £2,200,000. He assured the House that the figures he had given much underrated the actual loss, and that he had not taken into account at all the expenditure which had been made out of revenue. The Post Office in India entailed a loss of £148,000 per annum, and the Telegraphs a loss of £372,300. Those were the results of the business exploits of the Government in India. Those were the works which represented £75,000,000 sterling expended in reproductive public works. Those were very deplorable facts. Within the last theee years the increase of the permanent Debt of India had amounted to £14,000,000. That entailed an annual charge for interest of £600,000. The present frontier policy had enormously increased taxation in India, and he ventured to say that taxation was likely to be further increased to a point at which the people of India would be utterly unable to bear it. They were now only at the beginning of a vast military expenditure, if the policy he thought he foresaw in regard to that country was carried out. They had added 30,000 men to the Army, and he ventured to say that the operations in connection with the frontier, when completed, would not cost much less than £10,000,000. If that enormous and extravagant expenditure was undertaken for the good and benefit of the people of India, then, in view of the Revenue of India and the present rate of taxation in that country, he declared that the people were unable to bear it. If, on the other hand, as he was told, it was undertaken for Imperial purposes, then surely it followed and was reasonable that the cost must become an Imperial charge, and he was perfectly sure that in the end it must become an Imperial charge. The Government so far found it very easy to borrow the money to fill the ever-widening chasm in connection with Indian finance. It was easy to raise the money now, because the credit of India was good. The credit of India was good, because he did not believe the people who lent money to India took the trouble to look into the accounts. There was another reason why the credit of India was good. It was that there was a lurking conviction in the minds of those who advanced money that if the worst came the Imperial Exchequer would not let the Indian investors lose through over-confidence in a policy which the House and the constituencies had virtually sanctioned. It might be said that the Frontier Question was a military one; but he would venture to offer the opinion of very high military authorities on the policy that was now in mad career on the confines of Afghanistan. Who, he asked, was responsible for that policy? Who, by name, was responsible for what was now being done on the frontier of Afghanistan? Was it being carried out under the recommendation of astute military advisers whose opinions controverted those of the most consummate soldiers and statesmen, or was that policy actuated by feelings of Russophobism or wild Jingoism in mad career after decorations and K.C.B.'s? What was the advice of men whose name were engraven upon the history of India, Lord Lawrence, Sir James Outram, and Sir William R. Mansfield with regard to the frontier policy? Their advice was that an attack on India should always be met in India itself, and to leave anyone who had the taste for it to the enjoyment of operations in a country like Afghanistan, amongst its amiable inhabitants and their bloodthirsty ruler. Whoever was the author of this present policy, he would remind the House that the advice of past days was to defend India in India itself, and to leave to the enemies of India the arid deserts and the unwatered and unfruitful plains beyond it. The hon. Member for Evesham (Sir Richard Temple) had also protested against the policy of going into Afghanistan, saying that if we engaged in Afghanistan, Russia would find us in the hour of need impoverished and embarrassed; if we kept out of Afghanistan Russia would find us in the hour of need strong, rich, and prosperous. At present Russia in respect to India was at one great disadvantage—she could only approach through a very difficult country. Again, the same indisputably high authority protested, on another occasion, against the policy of fighting Russia somewhere in Afghanistan. But we were casting all those precious warnings to the winds and doing the very thing which the hon. Member warned us against doing. No doubt it would be argued that Russia was now very much nearer India than at the time that advice was given, but the geographical conditions of the question had not in the slightest degree altered. The geography of Afghanistan was not different from what it had been before, nor was he aware that there was any augmentation of her natural resources, or any increase in the amiability of her inhabitants. The Indian Frontier was past praying for now, and they must face the situation as it really stood. They had not only entered Afghanistan, but had made Quetta their head-quarters, and at enormous cost they were at that moment pushing through the last barrier which separated India from the territory of the Ameer. They were now within 80 miles of Candahar, and he asked the House whether the insidious influences which had carried us thus far were to be permitted to continue, and whether the operations he had alluded to were to go on until our head-quarters were established in Candahar itself? He wanted to ask the House that night whether it was willing to sanction a policy of that kind. He had no doubt hon. Members opposite would approve of our going to Candahar, or to Herat, or to the North Pole, or anywhere else whither it was the duty of a good Jingo to proceed; but he asked hon. Members on his own side of the House—Were they willing that that policy should be carried out? Were they willing it should go on? If so, then he could not refrain from asking why they turned out the Tory Government in 1880 and abandoned Candahar and the road to it; what was the meaning of all their talk about non-intervention and their pledges against military expenditure? He calculated that the country had since the time of Lord Lytton spent over Afghanistan in war and preparations for war, in Boundary Commissions and entertainments to the Ameer, and on roads, fortifications, and barracks, a sum of about £50,000,000. ["Hear, hear!"] Yes; about £50,000,000 had been spent in establishing ourselves in one corner of Afghanistan, and he ventured to say that that sum, enormous as it was, was but a mere fleabite compared with the sum that would have to be spent if the policy he had been describing were carried out. Turning to Burmah, the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India had told the House that the cost of operations there had already enormously exceeded the estimated cost of the expedition. Accompanying that admission there had been the statement that the cost would, in the end, be amply repaid to the country. He ventured to disagree with that statement, and based his disagreement on what Lower Burmah, the best part of the country, had cost us. The cost of acquiring Lower Burmah had been £19,000,000, and so far all we had got out of that country was a surplus revenue of £700,000 per annum. That sum, of course, had disappeared since we invaded Upper Burmah. Upper Burmah was a much less productive Province. It was much larger, and its settlement and administration would be much more costly. It was not too much to say that it would cost us £15,000,000 to settle Upper Burmah. No doubt, in a certain sense, the conquest of Upper Burmah had paid. It had paid the Indian officials very well — it had provided them with new and lucrative appointments — but it must be remembered that the Indian Government and the Indian people were two totally different entities. The most alarming aspect of this question was, he insisted, its political aspect. The House knew that the very solvency of India depended upon the sale of opium to the Chinese. Hitherto, we had been enabled to enforce the sale of that drug in China, because we had always been able to attack the seaboard of China, while she had never been able to retaliate upon us in any way. We had made two such attacks. What was our position now? If we attempted any attack upon China, that country would certainly retaliate with an incursion of Black Flags from the Shan Hills into Burmah. Therefore our position in India both with regard to Russia and China, was absolutely reversed. In former times neither of these countries could reach us at all; now it appeared we were at the mercy of any attack they might choose to direct against us. Our security depended upon the goodwill of Russia and of China, and if these Powers were simultaneously to attack us —and that they might do with no preconcertion whatever—it seemed to him we should have to retire both from Afghanistan and Upper Burmah. If we had been content to remain in our old position our Army would have been strong enough to defend our own territory, but it was a question whether we had resources enough to defend ourselves against Russia in Afghanistan and against China in Burmah. Those were contingencies which the present policy with India laid us open to. Our policy in Afghanistan was no longer a defensive and a protective one, but from all points an aggressive one, and for the purposes of that policy we had instituted a load of debt upon the Indian people which would be very hard to bear. What we had got for our money was a line of railway, which in some military contingency might be useful to us, but which in certain adverse circumstances might be equally useful to the invading forces. From our present position it appeared we were bound to occupy Afghanistan under two contingencies by no means improbable—namely, in the event of Russia crossing the paper boundary, which she declared at present she had no intention of doing, and in the event of the death of the Ameer. Abdurrahman could not live for ever, and were we prepared, in the state of chaos which must follow his demise, to undertake the vast obligations which would be imposed upon us? He (Mr. Slagg) was sure the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) would tell them that a great deal of that expenditure, although not absolutely productive in the commercial sense of the term, had been undertaken for purposes of trade, and was very useful for those purposes. He was certainly not indifferent to trade considerations. In fact, after the primary end of the welfare and happiness of his fellow-subjects in India, he claimed to have the interest of trade most in his mind in his action that night. But if they were to obtain good and expanding markets for the commerce of this country, they ought to do their best to provide that their customers in India should enjoy the fullest amount of prosperity, happiness, and comfort that could be secured for them. It could not be good for trade to burden them with enormous debt, or to harass them with increased taxation. Let us develop India by all means, but let it be developed in a businesslike and prudent manner. He would, perhaps, be told that India was a rich country, and could bear increased taxation; but it did not appear to him that that was the case. If she were rich, they would not at this juncture have had to put a tax of 2,000 per cent on every grain of salt which her people consumed. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Central Birmingham (Mr. John Bright) had said that "India had always seemed rich, because she had been so very easy to plunder." It would be better to improve our markets than to tax the people of India for outrageous frontier works, while in regard to Burmah we might do better for our customers there than to lay waste her fairest Provinces, and to lay on her people the cost of conquest and of an enormous Executive. As to the Salt Tax, the gravest aspect of that tax was that it pointed with absolute certainty to the fact there was not one other single resource of taxation left to our Indian financiers. He had looked at Native opinion with regard to the Salt Tax as expressed in Native newspapers, and found that out of 26 papers 24 spoke in terms almost of execration of the announcement of the enhancement of the Salt Duty. But there was something very much more ominous in the statements of the Native newspapers for his manufacturing friends—especially for his manufacturing friends in Lancashire —regarding the present taxation. He found that 11 of these papers strongly recommended a return to the obnoxious duties on the import of cotton goods in India, which were removed some years ago. He should be very sorry to see a reversion to such a policy, for next to a tax upon the very primary necessaries of food came in order an objection to a tax upon the first necessaries of clothing, while those imposts had been highly objectionable on account of their protective character, and because they gave a most unjust preference to the Indian manufacturer over his Lancashire rival. But he warned his manufacturing friends of the danger which threatened them, and from which they would not escape if they did not look more closely to the interests of India. He did not doubt that with all our resources and all our wealth we ought to hold and maintain our magnificent Indian Empire until such time, at least, as the people of that country could govern themselves. Surely out of 250,000,000 of people enough loyal and contented men could be found to defend the barriers of our Empire and of their country against any possible invader. It seemed to him that we should, however, be the more likely to find those loyal and contented men in the hour of need if we took pains now to govern their country with prudence, with economy, and with justice.

MR. CAINE (Barrow-in-Furness) said, he begged to second the Motion of his hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Slagg). A month or two ago when he was at Bombay he saw a number of Indian cotton manufacturers, who expressed a wish to see the duties re-imposed on cotton goods imported into India, but who also expressed their willingness to have an Excise duty equal to the import duties on Manchester goods placed upon the cotton manufactured in their own mills, so as to prevent any charge of Protection. His hon. Friend had dealt with a serious cause of increased expenditure; but he desired to say something on the methods by which the Government of India met it. He had no doubt that the increasing burdens of taxation had stimulated the Governments of the different Provinces of India to promote and enlarge the sale of intoxicating liquor with very serious results to the people of that country. He wished in his speech to prove that the growing exigencies of the Indian Government were leading to an undue stimulus of the Abkari or Excise Revenue by the establishment of spirit distilleries and liquor shops in large numbers of places where till recently they never existed, in defiance of Native opinion and the protests of the inhabitants, and that such increased facility for drinking inevitably produced a steadily increasing consumption, and spread misery and ruin among the industrial classes of India. In 1886 a meeting was held in London of the British and Colonial Temperance Congress, and certain resolutions were passed and brought to the notice of Lord Cross. The fact was that the Indian Government were in the position of licensed victuallers, who held a monopoly of the liquor traffic, and were responsible entirely for the amount of the liquor that was sold, and for the methods by which it was sold. The Committee appointed by the Government of Bengal in 1883-4 showed in their Report the system under which licences were granted and the conditions under which the liquor traffic was carried on. It showed, amongst other things, that the licenses for working stills and opening liquor shops were, as a rule, granted upon the auction system, being thus put up, as it were, to the highest bidder; that the licence holders were not to sell more than six quart bottles to one person at one time; that they were not to receive goods in barter for the liquor they sold; and that they were not to permit notoriously bad characters to resort to their shops. According to the evidence laid before the Committee, the out-stills were frequented by large numbers of people, young and old, who were found often in a high state of intoxication, singing ribald songs, and making all kinds of noises. In fact, the condition of things in many parts of India was precisely the same as one expected to find in uncontrolled and unchecked public-houses which exist in this country—in the lowest slums of London. Now, in consequence of the agitation which was got up by the British and Colonial Temperance Congress, Lord Cross sent a despatch to the Government of India, and he said that—

> "The Congress have been informed that the increase which recent years have shown in the Excise Revenue of India is due to a system which directly leads to the establishment of shops for the sale of liquor in large numbers of places where, till recently, such things were unknown."

A reply was returned on the 26th of June, 1887, and it was No. 86 of the Government of India's Papers of that year. The Paper which he held in his hand was an elaborate reply to the charge of the British and Colonial Temperance Congress. The case of the Government was summed up in the 3rd paragraph, in which it was stated—

> "The principles on which they have been based, and which have been unanimously accepted by all the authorities concerned, have been these—that liquor should be taxed and consumption restricted, as far as it is possible to do so, without imposing positive hardships upon the people and driving them to illicit manufacture. The facts now placed on record show that in this policy the Local Governments have been completely successful, and that the great increase of Excise Revenue in recent years, which the Congress take as evidence of the spread of drinking habits, really represents a much smaller consumption of liquor, and an infinitely better regulated consumption than the smaller revenue of former years."

The two sentences he had quoted from the Paper very fairly placed before the House the controversy between the British and Colonial Temperance Congress and himself in supporting this Resolution on the one hand, and the Government of India on the other. The reply all through was an attempt to prove that instead of the consumption of liquor having increased it has steadily decreased in consequence of the increased charges of taxation and higher rates of sale of spirits. Now, he wished to point out that in their Minutes the Government of India frankly admitted that the revenues had doubled in 10 years. They said—

> "The statement that the population of British India pay nearly twice as much taxation upon the intoxicants they consume as they did 10 years ago is not far from correct. The Excise Revenue was almost £2,300,000 in 1871-2 till 1873-4; it gradually increased to £2,600,000 in 1878-9, and since that year the rate of increase has been much more rapid, the amount in 1886-7 being £4,265,600."

They stated in the next paragraph—

> "This increase of revenue, it will be seen from this note, is in great measure due to the prevention of smuggling by better administration."

But all through the Paper there was no evidence adduced as to smuggling and illicit stills. They went to say—

> "It is due also in part to increase of population, and to improved means of communication. But it is in very large measure due to the fact that the last eight years have been years of extraordinary agricultural prosperity."

Let him point out in a few words the increase which had taken place during the last five years. In 1883 the revenue obtained from drink was £3,609,000, in 1884 £3,836,000, in 1885 £4,012,000, in 1886 £4,152,000, and in 1887 £4,266,000. There was a steady rise in the revenue with really no change either in the rate of taxation or of any other method of revenue to complicate the comparison. So that if during the five years the revenue from intoxicating liquor had increased £660,000, or close upon 20 per cent, and there had been no changes in the charges of taxation, he thought that proved there had been a steady increase and no decrease whatever in the consumption of intoxicating liquor. Now, in spite of these explanations and the repeated contention that diminished consumption was the necessary result of increased taxation, the Indian Government's own detailed figures given in the Minute abundantly proved that consumption increased notwithstanding increased taxation. There was a very curious Memorandum from Mr. E. B. Pritchard, Commissioner of Customs, Salt, Opium, and Abkari of Bombay, and if anybody ought to know the figures connected with Excise Revenue it surely ought to be a man who had the whole matter in charge. Mr. Pritchard carefully selected three districts, and gave the figures in each district, and then concluded from these three districts, where there appeared to have been on the face of it some diminution in the consumption of intoxicating liquors, that the same must apply to the 12 other districts of the Bombay Presidency. On page 7 of this Memorandum there was a statement of the number of gallons which had been issued from the distillery of Ahmedabad, a large manufactory situated in the Bombay Presidency. The figures began in 1873, and stopped in the year 1882. They began by giving five years, during which the rate of duty per gallon was one rupee and one anna. Wherever the duty was stationary and fixed, there was always a steady increase in the consumption of intoxicating liquor. In the first year the number of gallons consumed was 30,000, and in the last year it was 33,000. Then the duty was raised to two rupees, and naturally the revenue increased. During the four years, when there was a steady increase in the consumption of drink, drinking habits were formed, and these habits could not be got rid of, and in spite of the increased revenue there was an immediate rise in the amount of drink consumed under the two rupee duty. It appeared that 21,480 gallons were issued from the distillery in 1878-9, and this amount rose in three years to 27,427 gallons. But then the table was complicated by the consumption of drink in the whole district of Ahmedabad. In the first years the population of the district supplied was 118,000, but the population of the district supplied in 1881-2 was 856,000, and the figure of 46,000 gallons issued was given for this largely increased district. There the figures stopped. He wanted to know why the Government, in adopting this Memorandum of Mr. Pritchard, which was issued in 1883, did not carry out the remainder of the figures for this particular district? He could not help thinking that they did not do this because the figures told altogether against the whole Memorandum. In the Ahmedabad district the consumption had increased from 46,000 gallons in 1882, the last year given, to 48,000, 46,000, 57,000, and 63,000 in 1886, so that in this district there had been a steady increase, not of revenue, but of the number of gallons issued from the Government still of 30 per cent in five years, and the Government deliberately suppressed these facts. They found precisely the same thing in almost every statement laid before them. They took Ahmedabad in the first place, and then they took the figures from the Bombay Island, and one found precisely the same thing. There the duty was one rupee for four years, and there was a steady increase in the consumption from 907,000 to 979,000 gallons. Then the duty was raised to one rupee and 12 annas, and the number of gallons consumed in 1876-7 was 566,000. The consumption rose in the next year to 653,000, an increase of 16 per cent. Then the duty was raised to two rupees and four annas, and the consumption was 585,000 gallons. The consumption steadily rose every year, till 1881-2, when it reached 630,000 gallons. Now, why again did they stop there? Because the moment they came to add all these figures to the remaining four or five years available, they found it told altogether against the Memorandum, and entirely in favour of his contention, that the consumption of intoxicating liquors was steadily on the increase. During the four years the Indian Government gave in this table, from 1879 to 1882, with a duty of two rupees and four annas, the total consumption in the four years was 2,336,000 gallons. During the last four years, the figures for which they suppressed, the consumption had risen to 2,503,000 gallons, or a total increase in the four years of 167,000 gallons, and this was why they attempted to prove a decreased consumption. There were other tables relating to the Bombay Presidency which were equally fallacious. They mixed up an extended district. They took Surat City and six miles around. In this city there were 94,000 gallons consumed in 1881-2, but the table was muddled up with three different districts. In Surat City, Chorasi, Olpad, and Bordali Talukas, the entire Surat district, there were 182,000 gallons consumed in 1881-2. The consumption rose to 237,000 in 1882-3, to 249,000 in 1883-4, to 305,000 in 1884-5, and 324,000 in 1885-6, so that in this district, in which they quoted figures up to 1882 to prove their contention, that there was a diminished consumption with an increased revenue, the actual increase in the number of gallons of spirits turned out was 144,000 in five years, or something like 75 per cent. Now, he wished to call the attention of the House to one of the most mendacious statements ever put into a State document. It was a statement by Mr. Pritchard, and was to be found on page 9 of the Minute he held in his hand. It was the conclusion Mr. Pritchard drew from the sets of figures he (Mr. Caine) had quoted and enlarged upon. It was headed—"Reasons for belief that consumption has not generally increased;" and the statement was to the effect that—

> "If any general increase in consumption had taken place, there can be little doubt that it would have shown itself in one or other of the large cities just mentioned, each of which contains a large and striving population more or less accustomed to the use of ardent spirits. But nothing of the kind has occurred in any of those cities, and as the Abkari administration has been conducted on precisely the same principles in all parts of the Presidency, the natural presumption is that the consumption of spirit has not generally increased elsewhere."

Now, this Memorandum was written in 1883-4, and the Government had drafted it into their Minute. Why had not the Government of Bombay furnished tables of the Excise Revenue for the whole Presidency? He could only suppose it was because they would have knocked the bottom out of their own argument. He had tables, however, which supplied the deficiency. In 1881-2 the amount of liquor supplied in the Bombay Presidency was 1,982,000 gallons, and it rose steadily to 2,607,000 in 1886. Now, at the very time Mr. Pritchard wrote this Memorandum he must have known that that very year his total revenue had risen 25 per cent. If he did not, he was ignorant and incompetent. If he did, why did he insult the intelligence of the Government of India by writing such a ridiculous and mendacious paragraph?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): It is not Mr. Pritchard's Memorandum that the hon. Gentleman is quoting.

MR. CAINE said, he found that that was so; and, therefore, he changed the strictures he made to whoever compiled this curious Bombay Report, who, I understood, was Mr. Pritchard. He did not know who else was likely to have compiled it; but it really did not matter very much. Now, the increase in the five years, from 1882 to 1886, had been 31 per cent in Native manufactured spirit, and 22 per cent in imported spirit. Let him turn from Bombay to Bengal; there the out-still system was in full blast, and there were no changes worth notice in revenue charges to complicate the comparison. He hoped the House would listen to the figures in the Minute relating to Bengal, because they were more honest than the figures relating to Bombay. In the Minute the figures were brought down to 1886. He would not trouble the House by showing the way in which the number of shops had increased, and how the net revenue from liquor had increased. He would simply say that during the first seven years of the 15 years given in the Minute the average revenue from intoxicating liquor was £620,000; during the last seven years the average revenue was £900,000, or an increase of very nearly 50 per cent. Now, he found that just the same had taken place in nearly all the other districts of India. In Madras, in 1882, the revenue from intoxicating liquor was £601,000, while in 1886 it had risen to £810,000, or an increase of 35 per cent in four years. He had selected these periods because there was no change in the duty during that time. The Minute admitted that in the Punjaub the number of liquor shops had increased from 874 to 1722 in 20 years, an increase of 120 per cent. The Minute admitted that in the Central Provinces the number of liquor shops had increased from 6,000, in 1880, to 8,000, and that the revenue had more than doubled itself in 10 years. He would conclude this investigation in figures by a reference to the North-West Provinces. On page 14 of this Report it was said—

> "The totals for the United Provinces, as shown in the margin, exhibit a progressive increase up to 1876-7, sudden fall of 50 per cent in 1877-8 (a year of drought), and a rapid recovery afterwards; until in 1882-3 the issues are 56 per cent in excess of those of 1872-3, and this notwithstanding the extension of the farming and out-still systems to an area of over 15,000 square miles, with a population of 7,000,000 persons."

These figures showed a total issue in the first four years — 1872 to 1876 — of 4,632,000 gallons. During the last four years—from 1882-3 to 1886—the issue had risen to 5,692,000, an increase of 1,000,000, or 22 per cent in the four years. But here, again, there was a stoppage in the year 1883, and again he asked himself why these figures were not carried beyond this particular year, and again he said, because, had they, it would have completely knocked the bottom out of the Government's argument. The Official Report of the North-Western Provinces for 1886 said—

> "The Revenue from Excise has continued to advance steadily, and the gross receipts for the year under report are the highest on record, showing an increase of 12 per cent on the previous year."

And there was another significant paragraph in the Report—namely—

> "The high rise in Cawnpore is due to the opening of the new distillery. . . . . At Benares the licence fees for the year were very high, and to make their business profitable the retail dealers lowered their prices and thus largely increased the sale of liquor."

That was one of the commonest evils of this Abkari system. They give far too high a price for the monopoly, and then, finding they were not making as much money as they thought they ought, they decreased the price and very largely increased the sale. He commended to the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) a careful perusal of page 3 of the Excise Report of the North-Western Provinces for 1886. He contended that the whole tendency of the Excise system was to increase the consumption, and that he had proved it to the very hilt from the very documents which the Government of India, misled by some mendacious official, had put forward to prove the contrary. The Government were driving this liquor trade as hard as they could. Collectors found it the easiest way to increase their contribution to the revenue, and for years they had been stimulating the consumption of liquor to the utmost. If the Government continued their present policy of doubling the revenue every 10 years, in 30 years India would be one of the most drunken and most degraded countries on the face of the earth. He passed away now to another phase of the subject—namely, that the Government fostered and extended this system in defiance of Native opinion and the protests of the inhabitants, and constantly established out-stills in districts where drinking was practically unknown. In the Bombay Presidency the number of drinking shops increased steadily. In 1884-5 the number of shops was 3,594, and in 1885-6, 3,977, an increase of 11 per cent in a single year. He also commended to the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India a study of the North-Western Provinces Annual Report for 1886-7, and also the Bombay Presidency Report for the same year. On page 8 of the Report for the North-Western Provinces they were told that—

> "The District Reports contain repeated assurances from all parts of the Provinces that drinking is practically unknown."

He should have thought this an eminently satisfactory condition of things, and one which would have induced any responsible Government to congratulate themselves. On page 7 of the same report they were told how an enlightened Government was trying to get rid of such a happy moral condition, and such an unhappy condition of revenue—

> "In some districts the number of shops was below Government standard. Attempts were made to increase it, but not with conspicuous success. From Etah, Etawah, and Muttia, many new licences had to be withdrawn, because no liquor was sold, and because new shops put up for auction were not bid for."

Another paragraph stated that—

> "In the Jhansi district, on the other hand, the number of shops is largely in excess of the Government standard, and although the Commission of Excise makes no Report thereon, it appeared from the District Reports that at present it is inexpedient to make any considerable reduction in this number."

Exactly, where there were none they forced them in, and where there were too many they refused to reduce them, and that was the Abkari policy all through India. On page 7 of this Minute Mr. Pritchard made this statement—

> "In Ahmedabad several new shops were opened last year. A petition objecting to some of them was presented to the collector, who after inquiry ordered four of them to be closed."

That was what he called local option at the wrong end. If the Government had consulted the inhabitants of the district before the shops were opened the probability was that those shops would never have been opened at all. What the people demanded was that they should be consulted in the matter of the opening of new drinking shops. The same gentleman also expressed the opinion, and it was at the bottom of the whole thing—

> "It is an essential point in good Excise administration to place licit liquor within easy reach of all persons wanting drink."

He (Mr. Caine) could quote passage after passage from other Provincial Reports in the same direction, but time did not permit. He had spent a month in India with this question mainly in his mind. Every Native of influence and intelligence, every Christian missionary, every Englishman, civil or military, who knew any thing whatever of the Natives, as well as his own personal observation, confirmed him in the belief that the few passages he had quoted from the Report of the North-Western Provinces sufficiently indicated the disastrous policy of the Government of India in their efforts to raise revenue out of the vice and degradation of the people. He wanted to say a word upon the question of illicit distillation, of which a great deal was made. It was contended all through the Minute that there was no real increase in consumption, because in the earlier years, when the revenue was small, there was a large amount of illicit distillation. This was sheer humbug. Illicit distillation seldom existed until the Government had created a demand by setting up illicit distillation. He was told that if there was a district where there was no out-still they got a man who did not mind a month's imprisonment to start an illicit still. That afforded them an excuse for granting a licence, and bringing in a large amount of additional revenue. The Report of the Committee appointed to inquire into this very question in Bengal completely bore out the statement he had just made as to the way in which illicit distillation was brought about. Christian missionaries felt that these out-stills were the greatest difficulties they had to deal with, for they ruined the work in which they were engaged. He did not wonder that so great an authority on Indian questions as Sir William Hunter, in the wonderful speech he delivered lately on the religions of India, declared that if Christian missionaries were to succeed in India it must be upon the total abstinence basis. He (Mr. Caine) could, if time permitted, quote from the Report of the Bengal Committee, and from many other sources, to show that the Natives protested against this out-still system, and declared it as their absolute opinion that it largely increased drinking in India. This system had induced habits of intemperance where they never existed before, because it encouraged the consumption of spirits where spirits were never drunk before. He recommended any Member of the House who wished to know more of the opinions of the Natives of India to get the Report of the Excise Commission in Bengal and read for themselves. The great objection taken to his argument was that, after all, if they took the total amount of liquor consumed in India, and divided it by the population, it did not come to much more than a pint or a pint and a-half per head. But it must be remembered that there was an immense Mahomedan population who never drank at all—it was altogether against their religion. Then, again, most of the castes of India did not drink—indeed, from all the inquiries he had been able to make from those who knew the districts of India thoroughly well, he did not believe there were more than 20,000,000 or 25,000,000 people altogether who were in the habit of drinking intoxicating liquor, and even these generally drank it on festive occasions and not as a beverage. He did not know that he had any remedy to propose for this state of things that was likely to be accepted by the Government of India in their present frame of mind. The remedy he suggested was an exceedingly drastic one; it was that the principle which was gaining ground everywhere where the Anglo-Saxon race was to be found—the principle of Local Option in respect to this question—should be applied in India. It was, of course, very much easier to apply the principle of Local Option where liquor shops did not exist than where they did. In India, however, there was no personal monopoly. The monopoly belonged to the Government, so that the question of compensation for vested interests did not enter into the calculation. He sincerely trusted the Government of India would seriously consider whether it was not desirable, before they established any new out-still in any district, to find out whether it was the wish of the main body of the people in such district that an out-still should be established. He was perfectly certain that if this were honestly done there would not be another out-still established throughout the length and breadth of India. There was no doubt whatever that the mass of evidence contained in the two volumes from which he had quoted was full of most valuable information. He was sorry to say that the Reports had not been acted upon, like the Reports of a great many other Royal Commissions and special inquiries in this country and elsewhere. He suggested to the Government that they should appoint a Commission, a fair Commission, a Commission which would include a large proportion of Natives in its composition, and that in every Province of India a similar inquiry to that which had taken place in Bengal should be made. He had no desire to occupy the time of the House any longer, but he thought he had fully proved his case. He had fully shown that, in consequence of the policy which had been recently pursued in India of increasing the expenditure unduly, the Government were compelled to resort to a method for raising Revenue which was fraught with disaster to the people of India. He had the very greatest pleasure in seconding the Resolution of his hon. Friend (Mr. Slagg).

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in the opinion of this House, the unwise Frontier Policy of the Government of India is producing grave financial difficulties in that country, leading not only to increased burdens of taxation, but to the extension of the sale of inxtoxicating liquors for Revenue purposes, with serious results to the moral and material welfare of the people."—(*Mr. Slagg.*)

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): When I saw that the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Slagg) had secured an early night for his Motion, I thought that it was a fortunate circumstance in the interests of India. But that good fortune is considerably diminished, from the Indian point of view, from the extremely confused manner in which the affairs of India have been presented to the House. We have had two subjects of great importance brought before the House mixed up as if they were connected—two subjects which have not the remotest connection the one with the other. It shows the laxity of the Rules of this Assembly that a discussion on Indian affairs should be permitted to take so wide a range as this discussion has taken to-night. The second point which rather diminishes our good fortune is that the hon. Member for Burnley, instead of supporting his proposition—for which, I may say, there is much to be said—by facts and grave arguments, seemed to import into the whole of his speech an amount of what I may call partizan ferocity, which is a spirit not at all applicable to the discussion of Indian affairs, and from which, except on one occasion some years ago, Indian affairs have happily been free up to the present time. The hon. Member made a variety of statements and expressed a variety of opinions; but few of his statements and none of his opinions were supported by one single item of fact. The hon. Member's Motion speaks of the "unwise Frontier Policy of the Government of India." I agree that this policy has produced grave financial difficulties; but I can go no further with the hon. Member. I must utterly decline to follow the hon. Member for Barrow (Mr. Caine) into the subject with which he has dealt at such length. The operation of the Excise Laws in India, and their moral and financial effect, merits a discussion on its own account; but it is a most difficult and complicated subject, and ought not to be mixed up with the other question. All I wish to say about it is this—that just as with the subject brought forward by the hon. Member for Burnley, it requires to be debated with sanity and common sense, and not with the heat and acrimony—I would almost say fanaticism—which the hon. Member imports into every discussion when alcoholic drinks are concerned. I confine, therefore, my remarks to the first paragraph of the Resolution, which deals with the unwise frontier policy of the Government of India. If the hon. Member had omitted the adjective "unwise" from his Motion and spoken only of the frontier policy of the Government of India as the cause of the grave financial difficulties, no one would have objected to his Motion. But the adjective "unwise" demands some remarks. The hon. Member asked, almost in desperation, who was responsible for such a policy. Why, generally speaking, the House of Commons is, without doubt. But the parties primarily responsible for the expenditure were Lord Salisbury's Government of 1885 and the Ministers responsible for the policy of that day.

But the hon. Member must recollect that that policy was exposed to the House in great detail in the Indian Budget of 1885, and accepted without one word of criticism by the Party to which the hon. Member himself belongs, or by the hon. Member himself. I think, therefore, it is rather late in the day for the hon. Member to come down, as if he had never been in any Parliament before, and to tax the Government of India with having incurred this large expenditure in connection with the defence of the frontier, a policy in which the hon. Gentleman himself and all his Party acquiesced.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) wished to know how far those Estimates carried the frontier railway?

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I separate the expenditure on frontier defence from the expenditure under the heading of railway, road, and bridge communication. These Estimates were all laid before the House, and adhered to in the main, though, if anything, I think they have been exceeded up to the present time. That being so, the answer to the question as to the responsibility is that the House of Commons and the hon. Member himself are responsible, because he accepted the policy. Was it an unwise policy? What was the state of the frontier at that time? We were brought as near to war with Russia as we could be without actually being at war. The Prime Minister demanded an enormous Vote of Credit, and the Indian Government incurred immense expenditure in order to send up large bodies of troops to the frontier. The frontier was absolutely defenceless. There were no railways, and hardly any roads and bridges, to enable our troops to move about with ease or without very heavy loss and expense. Such was the state of the frontier at that time. We knew that the Russians were perfecting their arrangements in Central Asia with the view of bringing up large bodies of troops to the borders of Afghanistan, for the purpose, under certain circumstances, I suppose, of facilitating their entry into India; and the Indian Government decided that, for the ordinary security of India, it was absolutely necessary to undertake a more complete defence of the frontier. When our frontier was brought very near indeed to the frontier of so great a Power as Russia, was it unwise or foolish to take steps to enable us to defend our frontier? Is there any nation in the world which, in the circumstances, would not have adopted a precisely similar policy? The hon. Gentleman mistook the nature of the defence of the frontier. He insinuated, or asserted, that the object of this expenditure on the frontier was to enable us to enter Afghanistan and to carry on war with Russia in the neighbourhood of Herat. Its real object was precisely the reverse; it was to enable us to await the advent of a Russian Army in India itself, and to give to that position a strength and security which did not before exist. Therefore, the hon. Gentleman was misleading the House and the country when he stated that the object of the expenditure was to enable the Indian Government to occupy Afghanistan and to advance in the direction of Central Asia. When I was at the India Office large Estimates were submitted to it for two branches of frontier defence. One branch related to road communication and bridges, and the other to the construction of great fortified works. Both were submitted to and approved by the House of Commons; but I believe the Indian Government have spent no money whatever in the construction of great fortified works.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): Some.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: But nothing like what was estimated. I believe that by far the main amount of the expenditure has been confined to the construction of railways, roads, and bridges across the rivers in that part of the world. I quite admit that the proposed tunnel through the Khojak Range, which is to cost over £1,500,000, and to take two or three years to construct, is a matter which ought to be considered by the House. It is a most serious expenditure, and very solid reasons ought to be laid before the House before ratifying the action of the Indian Government; but you cannot say that the expenditure on railways has been an unwise expenditure, nor can you say that it is unproductive. It may not be productive now, but you cannot tell that in the course of time these railways may not repay, or, at any rate, yield a certain amount of interest on the capital expended upon them. Besides, railways, where there is a great extent of frontier, are necessary to enable troops to be moved about with anything like rapidity. The view of the hon. Member for Burnley, that the policy of the Government was an aggressive policy, is a mistake. The hon. Member condemns the annexation of Upper Burmah, and states that the ultimate cost of that annexation will amount to about £15,000,000. I believe that to be a most tremendous exaggeration; indeed, I doubt whether the cost up to the present time exceeds £4,000,000. Although with respect to the Government of Upper Burmah, there is now a yearly deficit, still that deficit ought to be, and I believe is, a decreasing deficit. In time you will probably find that Upper Burmah, like Lower Burmah, will be self-supporting, and will even pay a considerable sum into the funds of the Indian Government. If I recollect right, there has been for a long time in Lower Burmah a surplus of revenue over expenditure of £700,000 a-year. I believe that for the last three years or more Lower Burmah has paid upwards of £2,000,000 into the Indian Exchequer. [Sir George Campbell: No, no!] Well, my idea was that the Lower Burmah Administration had paid a surplus of £2,000,000 into the Calcutta Exchequer, and that that fact was a source of immense discontent among the people who inhabit the Burmah territory. I regard both the policy of the annexation of Burmah and the policy of frontier defence with the utmost gratification. I believe both policies reflect the highest credit on the Administration which sanctioned them, and on the House of Commons which ratified them. One will add to the security and the other to the prosperity of India, and I am certain that neither of those policies could have been avoided by any wise statesman, as both were rendered inevitable by the circumstances of the case. I come now to the statement of the hon. Gentleman who moved the Resolution that the frontier expenditure is causing grave financial difficulty in India. I think the financial difficulty in India at the present time is most grave. I doubt whether it could well be graver, and I am certain that that question ought to receive without delay the careful and concentrated attention of this House. What is the financial condition of India looked at broadly? The Indian Government has utterly sacrificed and eaten up the Famine Fund of £2,000,000. That is entirely gone. We suspended its operation in 1885, but we hoped that the state of things would improve, and that the fund would be enabled to come again into operation. I suppose I am correct in saying that the expenditure in connection with the prevention of famine since that time has been almost *nil*. Not only is this surplus of £2,000,000 gone, but you have had to fall back upon your ultimate taxation resources—the increase of the duty on salt—a step which only the most desperate financial condition could warrant. That tax has been regarded as the last resource in the case of war. It has been the object of successive Governments to reduce that tax to the lowest possible point. But the Government have been obliged to raise the Salt Tax in time of profound peace to such a degree that the Indian Government expect to get £1,700,000 yearly from the increase of the tax. Nothing could be more startling in the history of Indian finance than these two facts. The Indian Government have done more. They have imposed a Petroleum Tax. It will yield a comparatively small sum, about £60,000, but in its nature it is an oppressive and irritating tax, and one which will fall mainly on the poor. In spite of all this the Finance Minister of India is barely able to show a surplus, or if he does, it is so small as not to be worthy of the name. More than that, your whole railway enterprize has come to an end. I suppose nothing is more important to the future of India than that the railway system should be encouraged by the Government in every possible way. The more you can develop the railways of India the more will her wealth increase. But owing to financial conditions railway enterprize in India has been greatly checked, and will not be likely to revive during the next few years. The result is that you have positively got to the end of your taxation, what with an increased expenditure, owing to the necessity for an increased military force, with an increased expenditure for the defence of the frontier, and to the annexation of Burmah, and with an increased expenditure owing to the fall in silver. I am stating what no one can contradict. Certainly you might raise a few thousands more out of Income Tax, but it would be but a small sum, and the Finance Minister of India has nowhere to look for increased Revenue. Am I not right, therefore, in saying that the financial situation of India is very grave, and that never since the British Government took over the government of the country has it been worse? Under these circumstances there are certain remedies proposed. The hon. Gentleman, as I gather, would evactuate Burmah, and bring the expenditure on frontier defences to an end. But there are other remedies which the hon. Gentleman carefully abstained from advocating. I do not wonder that he did not state what harm had been done to Indian finance by the repeal of the Custom Duties on cotton, which, from a Native point of view, was exceedingly cruel and unjust. The active philanthropy of the hon. Gentleman did not carry him so far as to recommend such an act of justice. But there is another remedy which has not yet been tried, and which is most unpopular in the House of Commons, that of economy, the remedy of retrenchment. I think I shall be able to give the House some remarkable facts as to the increasing costs of the administration in India and the total repudiation by the Indian Government of the principles of economy. A paper on Indian resources from the pen of a distinguished gentleman was read the other day before the Society of Arts. From that I gathered the following figures, which are compiled from official records. I will first take the increased cost of administration quite apart from public works. I find that under the head of administration, which covers only a limited area, there has been an increase in 15 years, from 1870 to 1885, of £440,000. In the administration of law and justice in the same period the increase has been £403,000, and under the head of police £399,000. The total increased expenditure under these heads is, therefore, £1,232,000. The medical services have increased during the 15 years by £301,000, the political agencies by £414,000, the miscellaneous civil charges £83,000, and other expenditure £1,685,000. The total increase of expenditure between 1870 and 1885 has therefore been no less than £2,483,000. I pass to another branch of expenditure. Superannuation has increased in 15 years by no less than £1,953,000. Therefore, the total increase in 15 years of expenditure connected with administration is £5,668,000. In addition to that I add the increased cost of the collection of revenue in the same period. Under the head of land revenue there has been an increase of £1,118,000, and of opium £1,146,000. The increased cost of the collection of salt revenue is £58,000, making the total increase in the cost of collection £2,322,000. Adding together the total increased expenditure for administration purposes and collection of revenue, I find the increase has been no less than £7,990,000 in 15 years. It is there that large economies may and must be made. You have got absolutely to the end of your resources, and it is only by economies in your administration of India that you can find the means of meeting your expenditure. I said that the cost of collection of land revenue had increased. I find that in 1870 the land revenue only produced £744,000 less than it produced in 1885, but the cost of collection has increased by £1,188,000. The cost of collection has therefore increased to a much greater extent than the revenue itself. In 1870 the cost of collection was 10 per cent of the total, but in 1885 it amounted to 15 per cent, while the increase in the land revenue itself is less than 5 per cent. Those figures deserve great attention. So it is with regard to opium. Between 1870 and 1885 the opium revenue has increased by £863,000, but the increased cost of collection has been £1,146,000. These are matters which the House of Commons must look into, and not be satisfied with the ordinary official explanation, and the gloss which the official mind naturally puts upon those ugly facts. These matters require the attention of a Select Committee of the House. The other point which I wish to put before the House is, that while public works in India have been a large source of expenditure in one way, in another they have been very profitable. The hon. Member for Burnley denounced the policy pursued in regard to them, and seemed to think that it was carried out for reasons not very creditable to Indian Administrators. He insinuated that the English public were deceived as to the value of Indian securities. If there is one point in which Indian debt differs from almost any other, it is that it is almost wholly represented by assets. In other countries the debt has been wasted in wars or in warlike operations or in making good deficits. But the Indian debt of £160,000,000, no less than the debt of £140,000,000, is represented by public works, and that fact gives Indian credit great margin. People feel that if they lend money to India it is to make railways or irrigation works, or something which will probably prove remunerative. It will never do for the House to allow insinuations and asperations on Indian credit, such as those of the hon. Member for Burnley, to remain uncontradicted, and affect that credit.

Mr. SLAGG: I pointed out that India was losing a large amount by the public works to which the noble Lord has alluded.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I distinctly heard the hon. Gentleman say that Indian credit was much higher in the Money Market than it ought to be, owing to the nature of the case. I now wish to point out that large economies might be effected on the Indian public works, which may be divided into three branches—railways, irrigation, buildings, and roads. Comparing the year 1876 with the year 1885 we find that in the former year the revenue from railways amounted to £4,574,000, and the expenditure to £6,133,000, being an excess of expenditure over income of £1,559,000. In 1885 the revenue from Indian railways was £11,898,000, while the expenditure upon them was £12,945,000, showing an excess of expenditure over revenue of only £1,047,000. Therefore the excess of expenditure over revenue as regards Indian railways had fallen from £1,559,000 in 1876 to £1,047,000 in 1885, thus giving promise of a time when the revenue will exceed the expenditure and these railways be a source of profit instead of loss. Then with regard to irrigation works in India, the same feature of excess of expenditure is apparent in a remarkable degree. We find that, whereas in 1876 the revenue derived from them amounted to £575,000 and the expenditure upon them to £1,722,000, showing an excess of expenditure over revenue of £1,147,000, in 1885 the revenue derived from such works was £1,676,000, against an expenditure of £2,248,000, showing an excess of expenditure over revenue of only £572,000. Therefore, with regard to these works, again we may justly look forward to the time when the revenue will exceed the expenditure, and we shall have an additional source of revenue for India. I now come to a third class of public works in India, which to my mind is the most objectionable, with respect to which, in spite of repeated warnings, the Government of India has never been sufficiently on its guard. I refer to those in the nature of public buildings and roads. I find that, whereas the revenue derived from this class of works in 1876 was £524,000 and the expenditure upon it £4,683,000, showing an excess of expenditure over revenue of £4,159,000, in 1885 the revenue amounted to £615,000, against an expenditure of £5,009,000, showing an excess of expenditure over revenue of £4,394,000. These figures showed that instead of there having been a decrease in the amount of excess of expenditure over revenue between 1876 and 1885 of £512,000, as was the case with regard to the Indian railways, and of £575,000 as was the case with regard to the irrigation works, it had increased with regard to other public works £235,000 in that period. It is in the latter branch of public works, therefore, that the Indian Government must be compelled to effect economy, and if they do not effect such economy voluntarily, pressure must be brought to bear on them by the action of this House, either by passing a Resolution on the subject or by referring the question of Indian finance to a Select Committee. In one of these ways the Indian Government can be forced to make those large economies which they can make if they only have the will. I am very glad that this question has been brought before the House upon this occasion, as much good may result from its discussion. There is, however, another point to which I should like to refer in relation to this subject. It has been very justly observed that it is impossible to separate the question of Indian finance from that of European politics. I do not propose to enter into a lengthy examination of the subject at the present moment, but I may remark that there is the closest and most intimate connection between Indian expenditure and European politics. As you pursue a policy in Europe of one kind there is no doubt that India will have to pay for it. You can trace the vast increase in the expenditure upon the military frontiers of India directly to the policy which this country has pursued in Europe since the time of the Crimean War. At that period we adopted a policy against Russia which might have been suited to the circumstances of the time. Russia was then 1,500 miles away from our Indian frontier, and now she has approached to within 300 or 400 miles of it, and is in a position, by modern means of railway communication, without any very impossible or superhuman effort, to hurl great forces against the Afghan territory, and even upon the frontier of India itself. It is therefore worth the while of this House to consider whether it is wise to pursue in Europe a line of policy which, if unwisely pressed or harshly handled, may force Russia to collect and concentrate and even precipitate her armies upon our Indian frontier. Whatever may be the result of pursuing such a line of policy in Europe, depend upon it that India will have to pay for it. This is, however, far too large a subject for me to enter upon in detail to-night. The House, however, will do well to bear in mind the connection which I have pointed out exists between Indian expenditure and British European policy, and that by pursuing a certain policy in Europe we are necessarily throwing financial burdens upon India, with regard to which we must come to the consideration whether we shall not give her financial assistance. These are matters which the House will have to consider some time or other. For the moment I content myself by urging that the Indian Government must be taught economy and must be compelled to pursue a policy of retrenchment, because if she be not taught to pursue such a policy she will be approaching a financial condition which will not be far removed from actual insolvency.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) said, he was thankful to the noble Lord who had just spoken for the very important speech he had made, which contained an immense amount of truth. For his own part he entirely concurred with a great deal that the noble Lord had said. The House should, in his opinion, come to a definite conclusion as to the character of the policy which the Indian Government ought to pursue with regard to the frontiers of India and the Excise. The noble Lord had made the very important admission that the Indian frontier policy of the Government, which was laid before the country in 1885, did not include the extension of the railway beyond Quetta. The noble Lord said that he understood that the question of the extension of the railway beyond Quetta and the carrying of it through the Khojak Pass was one which was not determined upon, but which he thought the House ought to determine upon. He (Sir George Campbell) had put a Question on that subject not long ago to the Under Secretary for India; he asked the hon. Gentleman whether the Government was committed to that policy, and his answer was "Yes, Sir. It is under construction." That being so he was very glad that the noble Lord had given the House this very serious warning on the subject, and after his words he trusted that the Government would be induced to withhold their hand before they committed themselves irrevocably to an enterprize which would cost £1,500,000. When he saw upon the Paper the Notice of Motion of his hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Slagg) he was ready to support that Motion, under the idea that we were creeping up to Candahar without the sanction or the knowledge of the House, and he, in common with other Members of the House, was much astonished to hear that the railway through this Pass was already under construction. He said that this would be a most dangerous undertaking for the country to be committed to. He hoped the House would be given an opportunity of judging of that subject, and that the country would not be committed to this frontier policy without the knowledge and consent of the House. He agreed that our frontier policy in India was intimately connected with our home policy. Of course, if we bearded Russia in Europe she would make herself disagreeable, and, if she did not attack us in Asia, she would cause every difficulty there which would lead us into expenditure in regard to our frontier policy. He was not so sanguine as the noble Lord in regard to the future prospects of Upper Burmah; and he did not think that Lower Burmah had been financially a success in respect of anything else but the export of rice. But he heartily concurred with the noble Lord in the belief that the financial position of India was most grave, that it required consideration, and in the hope that it would be thoroughly considered by the House and the authorities in India. He also agreed with him in believing that a main remedy for this state of affairs lay in the use of efforts in the direction of economy, but at the same time he was not equally hopeful with him that the extravagances complained of would be so easily checked. When the noble Lord alluded to the greatly increased cost of the collection of the opium revenue he thought he was in error, because the increase was not in the cost of collection but in the cost of buying the raw material. Then with regard to the collection of the land revenue, he was not in a position to compare the figures relating to India with those relating to this country; because in India they must consider that not the cost of collection but the cost of administration of the whole estate of India was included, and although this was creeping on he did not consider it so extravagant as the noble Lord did when he compared it with the expenditure in this country. He agreed with him that the policy of constructing railways in India had been a successful policy, and hoped that the railways hitherto laid down were approaching that point when, instead of there being a deficit, there would be profit on their working. But he was not without apprehension that, having been successful in some cases, we might be led into making other railways that were not so paying. The subject, therefore, required to be carefully handled. The noble Lord was under the impression that the irrigation revenue was increasing; but, having had some experience of irrigation works in Bengal, he was obliged to say that the Returns were most disappointing. The House had at one time been under a great spell on this subject of irrigation, but he must point out that many of the works had not paid for the cost of administration, or returned one farthing of interest. He thought their experience in the matter ought rather to be taken as a warning that they should not rush too rashly into schemes that would land us in a loss. He was afraid with regard to this matter of frontier railways and some others that they were following a false system of finance. The expense connected with our frontier railways had been one of the main factors in bringing about the present financial position in India, and the increase of taxation, and to attempt to justify these railways under the head of productive works was, he thought wrong. The Report of the Committee contained these words—

> "It must be distinctly and emphatically understood that these railways should not lead to an increase of taxation."

And it seemed to him that that injunction had been directly violated. To class these wholly unproductive works in the same category with productive works without a sinking fund, or some plan by which the expenses might be met, seemed to him to be a very dangerous principle. Therefore, he strongly urged the Under Secretary for India in dealing with the account of unproductive expenditure, to treat it under a separate head, and to tell the House by what means the expenditure was to be met, and, further, that it should not be allowed to go on without being brought within the limits of the Budget. The Under Secretary, of course, desired to pass the Bill introduced by him the other night relating to the purchase of railways in India, and he reminded him that the matter was one which should be dealt with seriously and deliberately. It was to him a matter of great concern that the only part of the Revenue of India which showed an increase, was that which came from the Excise. This had been going up by leaps and bounds, and he said that this was a subject that required very careful consideration. He did not go as far as his hon. Friend behind him in attributing wicked designs to the Government of India. The Excise question in India was very much the same as the Excise question in this country—that was to say, with the advance of wealth, civilization and Christianity, people drank more than in former times. That being so, he thought the Government should face the question in the same spirit as they faced it at home; and that they were bound to raise the maximum Revenue on a minimum consumption of drink, and he was very much in doubt whether that principle was acted upon in India. As regarded Bengal, he thought there was good ground for complaint that the Government had pursued a policy which had, as shown by the Report of the Commission, undoubtedly led to a great increase of drinking, and to a, therefore, unjustifiable increase of Revenue. He said with sorrow and regret that the change made in this Province was made for the purpose of revenue. He would not believe that the Government of India were conspirators in wickedness, but he did hold that, in the present state of finance, this rapidly increasing revenue must become the subject of careful examination, and that if any blots were found upon the present system they should be got rid of even, if necessary, at some sacrifice of revenue. He had only to say that they were under a very great obligation to the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) opposite, for the admirable speech and the most important considerations which he had submitted to the House, and he hoped the result would be that the Government would reconsider their position with regard to an inquiry into the main question of Indian Policy. He thought it would be better to proceed with a limited inquiry into certain important questions connected with the Government of India. In his opinion the noble Lord the Member for Paddington was quite right in saying that the financial position was more grave and difficult than before, that the conscience of the people of this country was more awake with regard to Indian questions than was formerly the case. It was most necessary that full inquiry should be made.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham) said, he thought that the Mover and the Seconder of the Resolution before the House were to be congratulated on their ingenuity in framing that Resolution in such terms as caused two perfectly distinct subjects to be mixed up in one debate. The connecting link between those two subjects—the revenue—had, he ventured to say, nothing whatever to do with either of them. The duty of the Government to make the frontier safe, not only against attack but even against alarm, did not depend in any way upon revenue considerations. The Government of India conceived that, having undertaken the duty of governing and protecting the vast population that inhabited India, it was their duty to protect them so thoroughly against the possibility of foreign invasion as to enable them to dwell in safety; and if any apathy or any deficiency in that respect, based on any financial considerations, were allowed to interfere with the discharge of that duty by the Indian Government, they would, in his opinion, be guilty of a great political crime. The necessary money, if it could not be afforded out of the revenues of India, might perfectly and justly have been borrowed; and if the Government of India had borrowed the whole of the £8,500,000 that had been spent, or the whole of the £10,000,000 which the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Slagg) thought would be spent before the works were completed—if they were to borrow the whole of that money and not to spend a single shilling out of revenue, they would have been justified in so doing on sound economical considerations,. It was quite true that this expenditure was partly productive; but he would not rest the defence of the Indian Government on that ground. Some of the railways which had been made, and particularly the railway which went along the Valley of the Indus, through a very rich country capable of high cultivation, might probably attract population and cultivation, and become in course of time paying railways. But even if those railways were unproductive, and were certain to remain unproductive for ever, it would, nevertheless, have been the duty of the Government to make them. But if the question of frontier defence was not based on considerations of revenue, still less was it based upon the question of Excise administration. It was perfectly justifiable for the hon. Member and others who criticized the Excise administration of India to argue that particular systems might lead to increased drinking; but it was stated or insinuated that the officers of the Government deliberately propagated drunkenness for the purpose of revenue. [Mr. CAINE dissented.] That might not be what the hon. Member himself had said, but it was what had been said by others. When they said that officers of the Government of India deliberately propagated drunkenness to increase the revenue, those who made that statement were guilty of calumny against as honourable and upright a class of men as could be found in any part of Her Majesty's dominions. That statement, as the hon. Member reminded them, he would not say originally emanated from—but, as far as he was concerned, he had first found it in a Memorial from the British and Colonial Temperance Congress, of which the Bishop of London was president. What he complained of was that substantially similar statements were to be found in the present Resolution. It was implied in the present Resolution that the policy of the Government of India led to the extension of the sale of intoxicating liquors for revenue purposes. Now he had stated over and over again in that House, while he had the honour of holding his present office, what the policy was of the Secretary of State for India, and of the Government of India—a policy which was not a new, but an old policy, and which was enforced by the instructions of the Government on all their Excise officers. It was the policy of the Government to place as high a tax as possible on the spirits which were distilled as could be placed upon them without giving rise to smuggling and illicit distillation, and the measure of the height to which it was sought to raise the price was not that which would give the greatest return to the revenue, but that which would diminish as much as possible the consumption. Now, that being the policy of the Government, which was embodied in instructions to the officers of the Government, why should those officers be so wicked as the Bishop of London and the hon. Member seemed to suppose? Those men were absent from the country, they would read these calumnies for the first time in the newspapers, and it was quite impossible for them to answer. No doubt most of them were as callous to newspaper criticism and to speeches as Members of the House generally were; but some were deeply sensitive men, who would read with great pain charges which were so thoughtlessly thrown about by Bishops and Members of Parliament. The House would forgive him for saying these few words, because when things were said against the officials of India, without one tittle of evidence to support them, it was his duty to defend them.

MR. CAINE: I wish to state what my charge was. I charged the revenue officers with stimulating the revenue in intoxicating liquors, and I maintain that it is impossible to do that without producing an increase of drunkenness.

SIR JOHN GORST: The hon. Member practically charged them with stimulating the revenue by stimulating drunkenness. Now, with regard to the frontier policy, the present defensive works to which the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Slagg) referred, were, as the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) had reminded the House, recommended by a strong and carefully chosen Committee of experts in India, and were sanctioned by the noble Lord himself, and by the Government of which he was then a Member. These defensive works were carried out entirely within our own dominions of British India. There were no works in Afghanistan, as the hon. Member seemed to suppose, for Quetta and the district round was not part of Afghanistan or of Beloochistan, but of British India. Not only so, but the Pishin railway was entirely within our dominions, and was not at present designed to go out of them. The two great railways — the Scinde Pishin and the Scinde-Saugor railways —were not intended, as the hon. Member seemed to suppose, as a mere means of enabling us to invade any neighbouring country, but were simply and directly part of our plan of defence. Although no great sum of money had as yet been spent on defensive works, there had been constructed, in addition to the railways, two great military roads, one on the west side of the Indus, going through Bannu and Kohat to Khushalghur, and the other from Ghazi Khan to Pishin by Thal Chotiali, and forts and outposts had been built in the neighbourhood of Peshawur and the Khyber Pass. There were also works to cover other passes and to protect several railway bridges either made or in the course of construction. There were also extensive works designed for the protection of the Amram range at Quetta in a double line, an outer and an inner. The Amram range was a very formidable defensive position, and, with the railway completed to Quetta, could be made practically impregnable. The object of all these works was to remove, as far as possible, any temptation to anybody to invade British India. Now, with regard to the question of cost, he must remind the House that the Scinde-Pishin railway was interrupted on political grounds in 1880, and down to 1883 there was a complete suspension of the works. There was no doubt that this suspension had greatly added to the cost; and when the works were renewed in 1883, by the very same Government which originally stopped them, Brigadier General Sir Samuel Browne and his officers, civil and military, were instructed to carry them on with the greatest possible expedition. It was a work of extreme difficulty, its execution was attended with extraordinary hardship, and the Brigadier General in command and his officers, both civil and military, deserved the highest commendation for the manner in whith they had carried it out. The railway had been constructed, in part, at an altitude of 6,600 feet above the level of the sea—the highest railway in Europe, over the Brenner Pass, being only 4,400 feet—in a climate where the temperature in summer indoors was 124 degrees, and in winter 18 degrees below zero in the verandahs of the engineers' quarters. And in the circumstances, speed being of paramount importance, the difficulties being what they were, the railway could not have been constructed cheaper. One of the political results which had followed from the making of the railway was that from 25,000 to 40,000 Afghans had been employed for wages on the railway since November, 1883; and now, in the heart of Afghanistan, and especially in the Ghilzai country, there was not a village where gangers and navvies did not know English officers by sight. These Afghans had received from Englishmen kindness during epidemics of cholera and other diseases; they had been well and honestly paid their wages, and had carried back with them to their villages the strongest sense of the justice and benevolence of the British power. One remarkable instance of this was to be found in the Ghilzai rebellion, in which not a single shade of hostility to Great Britain was to be traced in the conduct of the rebels. Now, the common opinion seemed to be that the frontier of India was identical with the frontier of Afghanistan; but that was not the case, for all down the frontier of India, with the exception of a very small space, the dominions of the Ameer of Cabul were separated from British Territory by a fringe of independent tribes with whom generally we were now in the most cordial relations. That was not the case some years ago. When we first took possession of the country, the Sikh mismanagement of the Trans Indus districts left us a legacy of constant wars in a country which was studded all over with robber chiefs and forts. Tributes of human heads were common in some parts of the country. In the neighbourhood of Peshawur an English officer was unable to walk alone; the assassination of the infidel was being considered by many of the tribesmen the surest possible passport to Heaven. All this, thanks to a long course of pacific frontier policy, had been changed now. The Afridis, who were once the terror of all who passed through the Khyber Pass, had now made arrangements with the British Government by which they undertook the safety of the Pass, and the tolls were now levied on a regular system by British Authorities. Then there was the Khyber Pass Militia, which had been established and paid by funds derived from the Government, with the result that the district was now one of the safest in the world. The same remarks applied to several other chiefs and districts, for under the Treaty of Gandamak with Yakoob in 1879, the Government obtained the control of all the passes on the North West, and the right to enter into relations with all the tribes resident there, of which right the Indian Government had largely availed themselves. In short, he contended that the work which was carried on by Her Majesty's Government on the frontier had had the effect of greatly improving the relations between the British and Afghans. He thought he need not say much about Burmah after the speech of his noble Friend the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill). They had not spent one penny on the Burmah frontier to which the hon. Member (Mr. Slagg) had referred, because for one thing it was not yet known for certain where that portion began or ended. A Convention had indeed been entered into between Great Britain and China of a most friendly description, which secured that the frontier should be marked out by the joint consent of the two Governments. But, for the present, as to the frontier between British India and China, the part of the world on the borders of British India and of China was quite unknown It was a district of which both the British and Chinese were entirely ignorant, and for many years to come there was no practical danger of military operations being undertaken in that direction. He was sure he was expressing the sentiments of the noble Lord the Secretary of State for India (Viscount Cross) when he said that the speech the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington had made that evening would be most salutary to the Government of India. He did not wish to criticize the statements made in that speech. He thought the noble Lord took too gloomy a view of the actual results upon the Indian Government of the present financial embarrassment. His noble Friend would be glad to learn that although the Indian Famine Insurance Fund had been discontinued under that name, yet there were certain sums still charged against revenue—the interest, for instances on the guaranteed capital of the Indian Midland Railway Company—in consequence of an arrangement made by the noble Lord when in Office. Then, again, the railways were not stopped; but it was, he feared, true that without some great alteration in the revenue of India the Government was now at the end of their resources. No man was more alive to that fact than the noble Lord the Secretary of State for India, and no effort would be spared to bring the Government of India to fully recognize it. He admitted that the question of this revenue was one deserving of the most earnest consideration, but he saw no grounds whatever for alarm. He found no fault with the account given by the noble Lord of the increase of expenditure in India, but he should like to point out that exchange was now charged among the various items, which was formerly not the case, while with regard to the land revenue the increase was due to the cost of the village officers being now charged to that account, whereas formerly these officials were paid directly by the land owners. Then there was the construction of roads and bridges, which were of the utmost importance in provincial districts, which accounted for the expenditure of a very considerable sum of money. Passing to the question of Excise, he must protest against the confusion which the hon. Member for Barrow (Mr. Caine) had introduced by speaking as if the Government of India had anything to do with the question. The Government of India had no policy on the subject, and it had no Excise system. It was entirely a matter for the local Governments.

MR. CAINE said he used the plural—Governments. He knew it was purely a provincial matter.

SIR JOHN GORST said, the system was different in every Province, and was controlled by local Legislatures, where they existed. There were various causes of the difference in the various Excise systems of the different provinces—difference of race, of habits, of religion, and of language, and so on. These differences were often quite as great as between one country and another in Europe. It was, therefore, absolutely impossible to apply one rigid system to all the Provinces. The two Provinces in which there was the lowest consumption per head were the Punjab and Assam, and in those districts the consumption was a quarter of a pint for each adult male. The population in the Punjab was a sober Mahomedan population; the system was the Central Distillery system. The system in Assam was entirely the out-still system, owing to the backward condition of the country. The consumption per head was no higher than in the Punjab, but the people were addicted to opium and gurja. The hon. Member had indiscriminately complained of every Province and of the administration of every Province. He complained of Bombay, where the central distillery system exclusively prevailed, and of the North-Western Provinces. The general opinion was that the central distillery system was best both for morality and, it might seem strange to add, for the revenue. The out-still system was exploded in all the Provinces except Bengal and Assam, which in that respect were notoriously the most backward of all the Provinces of India. In Bengal the system was condemned and in process of being changed. Why, then, should the out-still system remain in any places? The answer was because there were tracts in India where nothing could replace it —places which were thinly populated and without roads. In some districts bordering on Native States the choice was really between the out-still system and no system at all. [Mr. CAINE: Hear, hear!] The hon. Member seemed to think that if out-stills were abolished there would be no liquor at all. But every revenue officer in India was opposed to that view. The universal opinion was that such a course would only lead to the increase of smuggling. But in the districts where the out-still system prevailed the difficulty of changing it was caused by the absence of roads and the impassable nature of the country in the rainy season, making it impossible to travel and carry liquor from one place to another. It ought not, however, to be forgotten that the spirit made in these out-stills was very weak—60, 75, and even 90 under proof; whereas European spirit was only 15 or 20 under proof. This liquor was thus not stronger than sherry or beer, and would not pay for carriage to a long distance, which would turn it sour; and if the out-still system were put down the people would either have to forgo the drink to which they were accustomed, or to have recourse to an illicit supply by distilling for themselves. The fact was that the criticism upon the Excise system of India was really a criticism upon the Excise system of Bengal. According to the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir G. Campbell) the system in Bengal was very unsatisfactory In 1884 an Excise Commission was appointed, consisting of two Europeans and two Natives, which examined witnesses and issued a most valuable Report. That Report had been acted upon ever since, and in 1885-6 the central distillery system was extended to 10 districts, and the number of central distilleries increased from 479 to 590. The out-stills were reduced from 3,943 to 3,614. An experiment was tried at Patna under a Native deputy-collector who had been a member of the Commission. A sudder district was marked out for central distilleries, and an outer circle fixed five miles off within which no out-stills were allowed. The number of out-stills outside the sudder circle was fixed, their capacity limited, an upset price laid down for the stills, and a minimum price put upon the liquor sold. All this was done in pursuance of the recommendations of the Commission. In 1886-7 the experiment was extended with certain necessary modifications to the whole of Bengal, and it was found that the central distilleries had increased from 590 to 672, though the out-stills remained practically the same, the reduction only being from 3,614 to 3,608. But though the number was so little reduced, the capacity was reduced from 111,538 gallons in 1885-6, to 74,788, or 33 per cent. The special difficulty of Bengal was that owing to the Permanent Settlement there was a want of revenue officers, with which class of men Bombay and Madras were plentifully supplied. The total consumption of spirits in India was only one-quarter of a gallon a head, which contrasted very favourably with that of the United Kingdom, where each person drank one gallon of spirits and 26½ gallons of beer. In Bengal there was only one liquor shop to every 13,000 or 14,000 of the population, and in six years, though the population had increased 7 per cent, the spirit shops had been reduced 28 per cent, and the fermented liquor shops 30 per cent. He now desired to say a word or two about toddy. He had heard an hon. Member say in that House that toddy was a comparatively wholesome beverage. So, indeed, it was, when it was first drawn from the tree, but in the course of a few hours it fermented itself, and became as strong as fairly strong beer. His hon. Friend had repeated in that House the statement that the consumption of toddy might be encouraged instead of the consumption of spirit. He should like to read to the House an extract from the Report of the Bengal Excise Commission. That extract, which was a complete answer to this contention, was as follows—

> "A majority of the Commission hold very strongly that wherever fermented liquors come into active competition with country spirit, the proper policy of Government should be so to shape its excise regulations as to encourage the use of the former; and they believe that if this were done it would be found safe to put restrictions on the manufacture of country spirit in such districts which would be dangerous in other districts. Baboo Krisna Behari Sen, one of the members of the Commission, has been unable fully to agree in this view, as he does not feel justified in recommending to the

Government a policy calculated to encourage the use of any intoxicating drink, and he is not satisfied that any real benefit to the cause of temperance would necessarily follow such encouragement, even though some decrease in the consumption of distilled spirit might be the immediate result. The majority of the Commission are convinced that fermented liquors are on the whole preferable to distilled spirit as being more wholesome, less intoxicating, and not so likely to lead to habits of confirmed drunkenness, but they are compelled to acknowledge that there is much to support their colleague's objection. It is notorious that drunkenness is more common during the tari season than at almost any other time of the year, and that much of it is due to that liquor. There are constant complaints of drunkenness among the Sonthals and other aboriginal people, supposed to be caused by country spirit, but really due to pachwai. Very many of the allegations made by missionaries, planters, and others against the evils and abuses of the out-still system turn out when examined to be really based on facts connected with the use or sale of fermented liquors; and it frequently happens that the shop described and complained against as an out-still is found to be a tari or pachwai shop. All this shows that fermented liquors in Bengal are not so harmless as they are sometimes held to be. But after a very careful consideration of the whole question, the majority of the Commission have come to the conclusion that the advantages which they hoped would attend the substitution of fermented liquors for spirit, especially among those aboriginal races who have lately taken to the latter, are so great as to outweigh the objections to giving any direct encouragement to the use of the former."

Tari, he might explain, was the Bengal word for toddy. The Government of Bombay had attempted to mitigate the intoxication which undoubtedly prevailed from a too great use of the hon. Gentleman's favourite beverage by putting a tax upon the trees. The fact was that the Excise regulations of the Government of India began in the year 1790, and had their origin in complaints of increasing drunkenness owing to the extreme cheapness of untaxed liquor. It was this extreme cheapness of liquor which was the chief difficulty in the enforcement of temperance in India. A man could get drunk for a halfpenny, the cost of a quart of mowhra spirit. What he wanted the House to conclude from the observations he had made was that the principle of Abkari legislation, as long since adopted and carried out by the Indian Administration, was perfectly sound But the application of this principle was attended with difficulties in some places, arising from local circumstances of which Members of the House of Commons must be necessarily ignorant, and in regard to which it could not acquire for itself reliable information. For the carrying out of this sound principle we must trust the officers of the Government and the local Legislature, who were Native as well as European. There was no ground for any alarm as to the increase of drinking habits in general throughout India. The statement that "we found the people of India sober and had left them drunk" was one of those clever epigrams which caught the ear of those only who were ignorant, and perhaps culpably ignorant, of the true facts of the case.

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire) said, that the speech of the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) had been one of the most powerful pleas in favour of economy that had ever been uttered in the House. They regarded him, therefore, as virtually, if not formally, a supporter of the views they advocated with regard to India; but if the noble Lord the Member for Paddington now spoke of economy, it should not be forgotten that it was his policy which reduced the finances of India to their present condition. He had added 30,000 men to the Indian Army, at a cost of £2,000,000 annually to the Indian Treasury, and a further £2,000,000 by annexing Burmah. No doubt, there was great room for economy in administration in India; but the noble Lord failed to tell them how disproportionate was the military expenditure to the Revenue. With regard to the public works of India, he entirely disputed the noble Lord's assertion as to the value of the assets in public improvements to be set off against the Debt. He would now pass to the latter part of the Motion, which dealt with the revenue from intoxicating drinks, and its pernicious effects on the moral condition of the country. He found an universal consensus of opinion in India that a great increase of intemperance was taking place. He did not think anyone in India would dispute that fact. If the Under Secretary for India were to pay another visit to the country and pay attention to this question, he thought he would return with very much changed views. He said, further, that the general opinion in India was that the great increase of intemperance was largely due to the unwise system adopted by the

Government with regard to the Excise. He put several Questions on the subject last Session, to which replies were given all of a more or less unsatisfactory kind. The Government of India had sent home two despatches dealing with this question, one of them a very important despatch, to which reference had been made. He believed that that despatch was altogether misleading, its conclusions fallacious, and the figures to which it pointed altogether incorrect. It was remarkable that that despatch scarcely alluded at all to the Report of the Bengal Excise Commission. That Commission had devoted an immense amount of attention to the subject, and issued a very elaborate Report filling two large volumes, and it had been his trying duty to wade through a large portion of it. He might say that the conclusions arrived at in that Report, drawn up by the officials of the Government in Bengal, were altogether at variance with the despatch of the Government of India. From that despatch one would think that the great object of the Government was to reduce the consumption of strong drink to a minimum, and that Bengal was rapidly advancing in the direction of temperance. But the Commission had come to the conclusion that there was an enormous increase in the sale of intoxicating drink in that Presidency. It made a calculation that the consumption of intoxicating drink had increased in eight years by 135 per cent. Would anyone dispute the soundness of this conclusion, which was arrived at by the Commission after taking all kinds of evidence upon the subject? He thought not. But to what was that enormous increase ascribable? It was ascribable to the introduction of the out-still system—that was to say, the farming out of the liquor trade over a large district to contractors with the power of virtually opening as many drinking shops as they chose in their districts. That ruinous system came into operation in 1876, and the revenues rose in eight years after that time from £600,000 to £1,000,000, and the Commission concluded that the consumption had increased to the extent he had mentioned. He would read to the House a letter from a retired civilian which gave a clear and accurate account of the system. It was as follows:—

> "To explain this by a case in point, in the year 1884 it was my duty, as the officer in charge of a district over 6,000 square miles in area, and with a population of 750,000 souls, to dispose of the farm or monopoly for both distilling and selling country spirits in it. The *modus operandi* was as follows:—Tenders were called for as to who would engage to sell the largest quantity of spirits within the period of his farm, the contractor binding himself to pay the still-head duty to the State, whether he were able to dispose of the whole quantity which he engaged to sell or not. The tenders were forwarded to the Commissioner of Excise, who accepted the tender of the farmer who promised to sell the most liquor and to pay the still-head duty on it to the State. This tender very much exceeded that of the year before, and the farmer, who was an enterprizing Parsee, soon began to ask for permission to open fresh liquor shops in villages where formerly none had existed. This permission, though not always granted, was accorded in some cases where he succeeded in making out that a demand for liquor existed, which was met before by smuggled illicit spirits."

Another letter from a retired Indian civilian said—

> "I assure you it went against my conscience the way I had to take tenders for the liquor farm at——The man who promised to sell the greatest quantity of spirits in the course of the year got the contract for farming the liquor. The Parsee contractor who promised to pay still-head duty on the largest quantity of spirits within the period of his farm, one twelvemonth, got the farm. Naturally, as soon as he did so, he wanted to open out more shops in as many fresh villages as he could."

Anyone could see that such a system necessarily conduced to the spread of intemperance and to the rapid extension of the sale of strong drink. Here was another instance out of a vast number which had come under his notice as to the effect of the out-still system reported by the Rev. Thomas Evans—

> "We have an out-still at Bistopore, which has been the sole cause of the miserable ruin that now stares us in the face. Bands of hardy peasants are neglecting cultivation, and pass the whole day in the out-stills, where they not merely sacrifice their hard-earned money, but corrupt their souls too. Street fights, scenes of violence, and other intolerable excesses are every-day events. I am at my wits' end to find out the reason why our rulers introduced into our country a system which kills us body and soul, and in return gives them but a paltry sum for licence tax. To check the growing evil we have set up an association here, and are trying hard to discourage drinking. We have, however, done very little, and our mission will evidently prove a hopeless failure if Government does not interfere. To frustrate our efforts the grog shops have formed a combination amongst themselves, and are doing all in their power to discourage our cause. They even threaten the villagers by instituting false suits

against them, and are on the look-out to thrash secretly the more energetic members of our association. In the course of a month matters have taken so serious a turn that we can hardly venture on out-door business after twilight but at the risk of our lives."

He (Mr. S. Smith) had waded through masses of evidence of the same nature as this. Then he would point out that the out-stills extracted a liquor much more deleterious than that which was produced under the old system, which might be described as being comparatively pure. In proof of that he would quote the evidence of one of the owners of out-stills, who said—

> "First of all we extract the pure spirit. This we cannot sell under a rupee a bottle, and we keep it for the few who can afford to pay for it. Then we go on forcing all we can out of the refuse of the Mowah by extra boiling. This is inferior stuff and very bitter, but we add plenty of water to it to make it sweet, and to sell it cheap, and it is strong enough to make the people drunk. And being cheap and strong they like it, and we sell plenty of it at great profit."

Now, the Secretary of State for India had said that as much drink could be had for a halfpenny as would make a man drunk. But the universal testimony of those examined before the Bengal Commission was that the excessive cheapness of drink made from the out-stills was one of the chief causes of the spread of drunkenness throughout the Bengal Presidency. He had received great complaints with regard to the drink-shops among the coolie population in India. The House was aware that tea cultivation was fast spreading in India, and that the custom was to import coolies to carry on the business. He had received a letter from a planter in Assam which explained how the system worked there. The letter contained the following passages:—

> "Is it not a significant fact that throughout the Province of Assam, at least the portion I have been in, that any stranger can tell he is nearing a tea garden when he sees the array of bottles set out to tempt the coolie to drink? Petitions have been sent in by many planters; but, although it is known in many instances the sub - divisional officers sympathize with the planters, they dare not contravene what the Chief Commissioner lays down on pain of what is well-known would follow, stoppage of promotion, &c., &c. It would be futile for us planters to agitate in the matter, as it would naturally bring us, or those who took a leading part, into disrepute with the Government, which no one cares to risk."

He (Mr. S. Smith) said that wherever there were coolies in India they were now tempted by those grog-shops, which were planted in the districts in order to gain revenue, and that, too, against the protests of the employers. He would now quote a statement made by the Bengal Commission appointed four years ago, which represented the final conclusion they arrived at. It was that—

> "There has been, undoubtedly, a very great increase of late years in the number of spirit drinkers among the wage-earning classes, including those who cultivate land on their own account in addition to working for hire. This has been most marked in the Behar spirit-drinking tract, in the cities of Bengal, and in the centres of the jute-pressing, cotton, jute-spinning, and coal-mining industries."

Sir RICHARD TEMPLE (Worcester, Evesham): What is the date of that?

Mr. S. SMITH: That was in 1884. The Bengal Commission reported in that year as to the lamentable effect of the multiplication of spirit licences in Bengal, and the evidence was so strong that the Government felt compelled to alter the system of giving out licences, and for two or three years there was a great reduction in the number issued, and in consequence a considerable falling off in the revenue to the extent of 10 per cent or more. But what then happened? The Government found that the revenue was falling off, and resolved to go back to the old system. He had put a Question to the Under Secretary for India with reference to a case in a district of Bengal where 50 new stills had been opened. The Under Secretary for India could not deny the fact; he was compelled to admit that the Government were going back to the old system of out-stills; he did not deny that 50 new stills had been opened in a single district, in spite of the urgent remonstrances of the Natives.

It was said that the Bombay Excise system was conducted on most excellent principles. It had been his part to bring before the House of Commons the history of the temperance movement which had taken place in the Bombay Presidency at Tannah and Colaba. That movement resulted in considerable loss to the liquor contractor. It was represented to Government that a general temperance movement had taken place among the population; that they were under pledges not to take drink; and the contractor who farmed the revenue set the law in motion, and called on the Government to suppress the movement. That was brought before the House last year. It was denied, of course, that the Government had done anything of the kind. He now asked the House to refer to one or two official documents, and he would then appeal to hon. Members to say whether there was not a considerable residue of truth in the statement made last year, that the Government were hostile to this temperance movement. In a despatch of the Governor of Bombay to the Secretary of State for India there was this passage—

> "The question for decision is, shall we sit quiet and allow this movement in the Colaba district to continue and to spread, and thereby to forfeit a large amount of revenue, or are measures to be adopted which will bring the people to their senses?"

He denied that anyone could read such a despatch and say that it was in favour of temperance. This movement was reducing the revenue derived from the liquor traffic in Bombay; and he would now read a proclamation issued by the magistrate of Colaba, and he would ask whether that document favoured the idea that the Government were in favour of this movement? The words of the proclamation were—

> "Notice is hereby given to all that I have heard that some bad people are endeavouring to force people who have a right to buy liquor and consume the same, not so to buy or consume the same, and use threats on those who would not listen to them. This warning is therefore given to such people that by so doing they are only incurring the risk of a criminal prosecution. The people are at liberty to drink or not to drink liquor as they choose; and whoever shall threaten them, saying that they shall not drink, or commit assault, should be prosecuted and severely punished with the punishment prescribed in law. —A. Keyser, District Magistrate, Colaba."

Eight men were actually imprisoned. He asked any impartial person, what construction could be put on a proclamation of that kind; what would be the effect of its being posted up in the midst of a population which trembled at the mention of an English magistrate? Only one construction could be placed upon it. These people were made to feel that in not using the liquor shops they were offending the Government. The proclamation had to be withdrawn, but the Government who withdrew it still said it was perfectly legal. Of course, there were the usual excuses; it was stated that the men in prison had practised intimidation to prevent the people using the liquor shops. But what did it amount to? It came merely to this—that a rule was made that people should be put out of caste and fined 50 rupees if they entered the liquor shops. But putting out of caste was a social regulation with which the Government had never before interfered; and now, when a Native was threatened to be put out of caste for drinking liquor, the Government came down with their heavy hand and threatened and punished the individuals who had enforced that social regulation. He said it was the same as when a congregation in this country made a rule that those who took intoxicating drinks should be turned out of membership. He said it was preposterous that this should be made a reason for punishing those who were advancing the temperance movement in India. The Under Secretary for India had joked him on the subject of toddy. He would tell the House what toddy was. In almost every piece of ground attached to houses in India there were palm trees, and out of those trees was obtained a juice which, if used directly it came from the tree, was most refreshing and unintoxicating. But the Government had put a heavy tax on those trees, and the result was that the people, not being able to afford the tax, were driven to the liquor shops which were farmed out to the highest bidders. It was clear that if the people could not get this toddy they would go to the liquor shops. The Government said that this was not a genuine temperance movement, but that it was merely a strike against the tax on toddy. He said that the Government ought to be thankful to see the people becoming temperate, no matter from what cause it arose. Further, he said that the drink sold to the people in the liquor shops was exceedingly injurious, particularly to the Asiatic constitution. There was no such thing as a moderate consumption of drink possible in Asiatic countries; everyone knew that, and he would like to refer to a striking article on Islam in *The Contemporary Review* for February, 1888, which said that—

> "Owing probably to some hitherto untraced peculiarity of either their physical or more probably mental constitution, alcohol in any quantities seemed to set most Asiatics—the Jews were an exception—on fire, to produce an irresistible craving for more, and to compel them

to go on drinking until they were sunk in a stupor of intoxication."

There was no middle course possible. There was no class of people in India such as we had in this country who used a small amount of intoxicants with apparently little injury. You had in India a population who were by nature and religion total abstainers, but who, when they took to drink, soon became paupers and vagabonds; so that he said this question was much more serious with regard to India than with regard to England. The people of India believed that a great wrong had been done to their country; they asked for what we demanded—namely, for Local Option. He had been told that every municipality in India would suppress the use of strong drinks if the Government would allow them. But the Government would not allow them. We were doing in India with drink what we had done in China with opium. We began by sending 200 chests of opium; the Chinese did not want it, but we were told that so small a quantity would not do the people any harm. But now we sent nearly 100,000 chests annually, and the people in China were being slowly poisoned by this traffic. The opium traffic grew by slow degrees, always with some excuse, till it became so huge it was impossible to stop it. The drink trade was growing in a similar manner; and wherever it extended itself it meant ruin, misery, and death to the people of India. He felt very strongly on this subject, because he saw that unless some check were put upon this trade it would certainly continue to grow. The Government in India was always in want of revenue. The taxation of the consumption of liquor was one of the easiest ways by which revenue could be raised; the revenue from this source had nearly doubled within the last 10 years, and unless something was done within the next 10 years it would double again. The interest of the entire Indian Service was bound up with the growth of revenue. The system under which they lived necessarily compelled them to seek new sources of revenue, and they would be more than human if they did not wink at the means by which the revenue was obtained. Before sitting down he could not forbear uttering his protest against an even deeper stain on our Indian Administration—he referred to the detestable licensing of vice, the most loathsome system he had ever heard of, and the most cynical in its contempt for morality. The Government might depend that, as soon as the facts of this case were known to the people of this country, there would arise such a cry as would compel the abolition of these infamous Acts. Finally, he said that the only sound principle on which to govern India was that we should regard it as a great trust confided to us by Almighty God, having solely in view the good of its people; and in so doing he believed we should receive the reward of an enduring and honourable connection with that country.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE (Worcester, Evesham) said, that the positions of the hon. Mover and the hon. Seconder having been shaken, first by the battery of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), and then by the phalanx of statistics of the Under Secretary of State for India, he would let loose some cavalry, so to speak, on the retreating arguments. The hon. Member for Barrow-in-Furness (Mr. Caine) had lately returned from a tour round the world. During that time, like the hero of the Odyssey, he had seen the cities of many men, and doubtless thought he had discerned their tempers and dispositions. He now sat opposite, with freshly-gained knowledge, the Ulysses of Barrow-in-Furness. During that tour the hon. Gentleman honoured India by staying there one full month, and during that period he had just assured the House that the one question mainly on his mind was the liquor traffic, and that every clergyman and missionary to whom he spoke was unanimous on the subject; he said nothing of having consulted anyone else. The House would readily see that, with that strong feeling of his—he was going to say prejudice, but it would not be respectful—the hon. Gentleman naturally saw everything through an exclusive medium. He would be doing the hon. Gentleman no injustice when he said he was one of the apostles of the temperance movement. He desired to speak with all respect and sympathy of the temperance party; but the House knew that they were somewhat given to exaggeration, and to extreme statements of fact and opinion about affairs at home, even where verification of the allegations on the spot was possible. How great must the temptation to exaggerate be regarding a distant country like India, where no such verification was possible. He desired for a few moments to come to close quarters with the hon. Members for Barrow and Flintshire, and he ventured to affirm, despite the information which the hon. Members had gleaned in India, that the leading desire of the Government of India and its officers was to tax liquor, and thereby limit its consumption. If the motives were different he was one of the Gentlemen incriminated, for the House would remember that he had at different times governed one-half of that great Empire. Was it likely—was it even credible—that such a Body as the Government of India and its officers—admitted by hon. Gentlemen opposite to be second to none in the world—could ever be parties to such a nefarious policy as to encourage intemperance for the sake of revenue? If the tax were stopped, if all these bugbears of hon. Gentlemen opposite were put an end to, the result would only be that the Natives of India would consume untaxed liquor, and that liquor would be manufactured to an immense amount in a country where the flowers and the fruit of the trees and the very stalks of the herbs furnished material for alcoholic liquor. The hon. Member for Barrow had declared that the out-still system was in full force in Bengal. But when he (Sir Richard Temple) was Governor of Bengal he would have none of them; and the same policy was followed by his Predecessor, the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell). This was up to 1877. But after them a new Pharaoh came. He had passed beyond the region of human censure, and could not answer for himself. He would, therefore, endeavour, in the fewest possible words, to state what he thought would have been the views of that distinguished gentleman had he been now present. He believed the views of this high official would have been stated to this effect—that the manner in which the out-still system had been suppressed by him (Sir Richard Temple) and his Predecessor would tend to encourage or permit illicit manufacture, and therefore he was bound, not only for the sake of the Revenue, but in the interest of suppressing those malpractices, to open out a number of out-stills. This was about 1879. For his part, he believed this was a mistaken idea, and that some harm was done in consequence. He must explain for a moment how the out-still system worked. The Excise used to be managed by farmers or contractors. These became automatically a Vigilance Executive for preventing illicit practices; so far, well. But then they had an interest in the encouragement of drinking—so they had to be discontinued. In substitution a Central Distillery was licensed in each district. But in the outlying parts of the district, no licensed distillery being at hand, great care was needed to prevent temptation arising from illicit practices. Hence it was argued by some that unless we could allow the people of India to get liquor, lawfully and reasonably, they would employ the abundant means Nature had placed at their disposal to manufacture liquor for themselves. That was the argument for out-stills. But, sharing the fear expressed by hon. Gentlemen opposite, he and his Friends had always set their faces against the system. When this system was practically resuscitated in Bengal, the action of public opinion on the Government of Bengal began subsequently to be felt. The rectification of the system began and went steadily on, and in the course of three or four years a Commission was appointed. The Report of that body had been referred to in the course of the debate; but since 1884, when it was issued, many things had happened, among them the gradual suppression of out-stills. That mistake had now been almost entirely rectified, and if any aberration still remained, he hoped it would soon disappear. With regard to the people of India generally, he pointed out that there had been undoubtedly an increase of late years in the Excise Revenue. That increase, however, was largely due to the enhancement in the price of liquor owing to the Excise system. Whatever increase there might be in the consumption of liquor, it was mainly due to the prosperity of the people and the increase in the population of the country. In the United

Kingdom, whenever the labouring classes were prosperous the Excise Revenue rose, and India was no exception to the rule. But it was absurd to say that we had introduced drinking customs among the people of India. Drinking was no new practice. If there was any practice of immemorial antiquity connected with the Indian people, it was that of drinking. The ancient Vedic writings teemed with allusions to the practice. All their history, ancient, mediæval, and modern, was full of similar allusions. In fact, certain classes of Natives had always drunk, still drank, and would continue to drink to the end of the chapter, until human nature changed, or until the admonitions of temperance apostles reached their ears. In justice to the people of India, however, it must be said that in the main they were a wonderfully temperate people. It was quite true, as stated in this debate by the Under Secretary of State for India, that it was in the towns, and not in the country that the drinking practices existed most. The rural population was temperate to a degree unknown in northern latitudes. There were, however, certain wild tribes living in the forests and mountains who were undoubtedly addicted to drinking; and it was difficult to introduce an Excise system which would check that consumption by taxation and yet avoid offering temptations to intemperance. It was the old story of sailing between Scylla and Charybdis, and it required great care on the part of the Government to steer the vessel of Administration between the opposing rocks. The hon. Member for Barrow spoke of the Mahomedans as if they were bound by the practices as well as the dictates of their religion to be total abstainers. When he heard that statement made by the hon. Member he at once said "No" to it. The hon. Member seemed to be a little surprised at the interruption; but in support of his contention he would read one or two racy sentences from a recent publication on the subject, in order to give the House an idea of the prevailing sentiment of Mahomedans on the subject. Although the Prophet of the Mahomedan religion forbade indulgence in wine drinking and wrote against it, the prohibition had never been strictly observed by any race except the Arabs of Arabia. The Persians were notoriously wine bibbers, and the poetic literature of Persia was steeped with references to love and wine. That is the popular literature among the cultured Mahomedans of India to this day. In a publication prepared by one of the most learned and accomplished officers, now retired, in the service of India, and who was a hearty advocate of temperance, this passage occurred—

> "It appears from a Mahomedan history that the King said to his Minister, 'Shall we drink a little wine?' Accordingly much wine was brought in. The King said, 'Let us drink fair measure and fill the cup evenly, in order that there may be no unfairness.'"

That was exactly the advice of Sairey Gamp to Betsy Prig—"Whatever you do, drink fair." One Sultan in India plunges into dissipation, and all ranks acquired a taste for wine-drinking. Another Sultan in India is of the same mind with hon. Members opposite, and enacts total prohibition. But "the dissolute distil wine clandestinely, put in leather bags, and convey it concealed in hay and firewood." Baber, one of the great Emperors of India, wrote of himself—"I now want something less than one year of 40 years, and I drink wine most copiously." With regard to the Mahomedans of to-day, Canon Taylor writes—

> "Has Islam abolished drunkenness? Why, night after night we took up dozens of drunkards in Zanzibar."

The celebrated poet Hafiz told us how his spiritual guide went from the mosque to the wineshop. It would be seen, therefore, that the idea of the Mahomedans being taught to drink by us was an absurdity. Still he repeated that India on the whole was a land of temperance. If the average expenditure in this respect of the Indian people were compared with the people of England, it would be admitted that we were not in a position to throw stones. Take one large fact. For the United Kingdom we had an Excise Revenue of £25,000,000 to a population of 37,000,000. In India we had an Excise Revenue of only £4,000,000 to a population of 200,000,000—in British territories proper, exclusive of Native States. He hoped that, on realizing this fact, hon. Members who had raised the question would go home and sleep more soundly on account of the consolation to be derived from the comparison. He must now turn to the second part of the Motion—namely, the Indian Frontier. The speech of the hon. Mover, the Member for Burnley (Mr. Slagg), so far from being an impertinence, was most welcome, for it was well that the policy of the Government should be criticized in the calm, philosophical, and, on the whole, just spirit displayed by the hon. Member. Reference was made to the venerated memory of Lord Lawrence, as if his policy had been something different from what was now being done; but it was, in effect, the same. A quotation had been made from a Minute he (Sir Richard Temple) wrote 20 years ago, with an implication that this differed from his present view. But he adhered to every word of that quotation. It laid down the principle of what had since been our frontier policy. We were advancing to our own frontier and we had not advanced an inch beyond it, but we had steadily kept within it. We were not preparing to advance into Afghanistan. As long as we kept to our own frontier, could there be any mistake in standing firmly there, armed as we ought to be and attended as of old by the British Lion and the Indian Tiger? In what way were we to stand armed? We had our fortifications and our railways to the mouths of the passes leading from India to Afghanistan as our gates and portals. The intention, of course, was that an enemy would have to cross the Indus in the face of British opposition offered by troops fresh from the interior of India. The Indus was bridged in two places and approached by railways at three points, and there were bridges over several great rivers, affluents of the Indus. The hon. Member seemed to think that these were unremunerative railways in a sterile country, and were fit for military purposes only. But there was every right to expect that these railways would pay. They passed through tracts not sterile but alluvial. One ran down the Valley of the Indus itself; another down the Valley of the Sutlej; and a third ran across that Mesopotamia, as it were, which was formed by the convergence of rivers near Multan, and was one of the richest districts of India. These regions were irrigated by countless canals, filled every rainy season from the great rivers. The soil was rich, and was peopled by an increasing population. Again, some of these railways crossed tracts of uncultivated but cultivable land, ready to receive the surplus population of other parts of India. Moreover, these Frontier Railways formed part of the State railway system of India, comprising many thousand miles of length. He believed it would be found that the railways in India under Government control were yielding more or less a return considerably exceeding the interest upon the capital invested in their construction. He could confirm what the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) had said—that the Amran range of mountains near Chaman and the Valley of Pisheen were within the British Frontier, and had been so since 1878, just before the Treaty of Gandamak. We were bound to have defensive works at that point. He supposed hon. Members would not say that because they dissented from a policy under which the tract had been annexed, therefore we were to leave our frontier undefended in its most vulnerable points. As for Quetta and the Bolan Pass, they had never belonged to Afghanistan, but had been parts of Beloochistan, and had been under our control the whole of this generation. It seemed to be inferred that we had some intention of going to Candahar. Although assurances to the contrary might rather be expected to come from the Government, he could, even as an independent Member, give an assurance that nothing was more remote from the intention of the Government of India. Of course, he could not say what might happen in the event of a war with Russia—a death struggle between the British Lion and the Russian Bear for the domination of Southern Asia. Perhaps, in that event, Candahar might be the proper place at which to give battle. It was instantly accessible from our frontier posts at Chaman—he knew that well, having twice ridden over the ground. Candahar was the finest strategic position in the whole of Afghanistan, lying between a river and a desert. On our left, facing Russia, that desert was an impassable flank. The irrigated country round the city formed an inexhaustible source of supply. The enemy must pass by here in order to approach our frontier. We might stop him here, then, or we might let him pass by here, in order to give him battle on the Indus. But if he was defeated on that line, he would have no retreat, and must either succumb or surrender. As to the temper of the Afghans, there was a friendly and almost a brotherly feeling between our officers and the Afghan officers, which was never before known in the memory of man. There had been banquets—as shown by the latest Blue Books—at which the Ameer's officers had said to our officers—"Now we have for the first time eaten together, sat at the same table, and partaken of the same salt, and we shall be friends for ever." In fact, the Afghans had now come to look upon us not as invaders, but as their protectors against possible enemies; they had heard of all the awful stories connected with Russian conquests in the Turkoman country; they contrasted our action with that of the Russians, and they had learnt to respect our wisdom and to admire our candour and forbearance. The hon. Member opposite had spoken as if there had been no change in the position of Russia within the last 20 years; whereas since then there had been all the change in the world in it. In the interval Russia had made great advances in those regions—she had completed her railway system to the west shore of the Caspian, had established military flotillas across that inland sea, and had constructed railways from the eastern shore towards Afghanistan, her nearest railway station now being not far off from the new Russo-Afghan frontier so lately demarcated. Indeed, Russia had changed her position to an immeasurable extent, and now her frontier ran for many hundred miles conterminously with that of Afghanistan. In reply to hon Members opposite, he quite believed that it had been imperatively necessary for the Government of India, in 1885, to increase their Army by 30,000 men, including 10,000 European troops, because it was essential to show before the people of India, and before the world, that they had two Army Corps mobilized on the North-Western frontier while the Russo-Afghan boundary was unsettled. Now that it had been settled, it was a question whether it was necessary to continue the full amount of that increase in the Indian Army at an additional cost of £2,000,000 sterling annually. Some of that increase, needed for the occupation of Upper Burmah, at one extremity and of Beloochistan at the other, must indeed be kept up. But some part might, he thought, be spared to the relief of Indian finance. In the event of war being threatened with Russia, it was not 10,000 Europeans additional that they would have to send there; it was more like 20,000 or 30,000 that they would have to despatch, and it was a question whether they should keep them in this country in a good climate or keep them in India. Now that the Russo-Afghan boundaries had been demarcated, and Russia had agreed to all that, and we, on our side, and the Afghans also on their side, had agreed to it, there was no use in complaining about the merits or demerits of the frontier line. If any diplomatic milk had been spilt in those sandy regions, it was idle crying over it. Before concluding, he ought to say a word or two about Burmah. Much had been said, in this debate, about Burmah—exclusive of Upper Burmah, recently annexed—not paying the interest on the debt incurred for each successive conquest. He thought they ought to have had notice that such a calculation was intended to be put before the House, in order that they might compare the figures. If they went back 30 or 40 years, however, they would have to reckon on the profits of the old Provinces, now included in British Burmah. And if the debt incurred for the conquest of Pegu alone in Lord Dalhousie's day was calculated, he rather thought it would be found that the Irawaddy Delta, with its £3,000,000 of revenue, was now in a fair way of repaying the cost of its annexation. If they took that £3,000,000 which was thus paid by Lower Burmah, he believed they would find that not more than £1,000,000 or £1,500,000 was spent by Lower Burmah on itself, and that the other £2,000,000, or at least £1,500,000, were given to the Empire, thus defraying or tending to defray the debt incurred for the conquest of Pegu. But if they went back to the old debt incurred for the acquisition of the other parts of Burmah, the Provinces of Tenasserim and Arracan, they must consider what had been the profits derived from those Provinces in the last 40 years. That was a considerable calculation. He spoke feelingly on that point, because he was a Financial Commissioner for the Constitution of British Burmah some 27 years ago. In order to make a proper comparison, they ought to go back a whole generation, and it would be impossible to do that at a moment's notice, without knowing that the point was to be raised in this debate. As regarded the frontier, he need not repeat what had been so ably said by the Under Secretary for India; but the general terms were now settled most peaceably and amicably with China. Indeed China, in consideration of the receipt of a merely honorary recognition from us from time to time, had entirely and formally agreed to our Sovereignty in Upper Burmah, and had, in general terms, agreed to a line of frontier which remained to be demarcated. And as for China invading us in that quarter, as seemed to be foreshadowed by the hon. Gentleman opposite, if he would reflect on the mighty mountain barriers which would have to be crossed, and the desolate or sparsely inhabited uplands of Yunnan, which must be traversed before an invading Chinese force could approach the frontier of Burmah, he would see that there was no danger whatever from that quarter. The danger in that region which menaced us proceeded from the proximity of a great European Power, which, happily, was very friendly with us now; but it was on account of that danger that the annexation of Upper Burmah was determined upon, which had become just as well as expedient, from the misconduct for many years of the late King. He would conclude by reminding the House of what he had ventured to urge on a recent occasion, to the effect that the people of India were not really poor, and this was the answer to the financial vaticinations of hon. Members opposite in this debate. They were poor in a certain sense; but in all the ordinary economic aspects of poverty or wealth they were better to do, relatively, than most of the European nations. They were multiplying fast; the cultivaion of the country was expanding fast; and their absorption of the precious metals had been among the wonders of the monetary world. They were becoming educated, and their loyalty had been stimulated by recent events. He would further remind the House that if there had been a deficit on the whole balance of accounts of revenue and expenditure, as was recently stated by the Under Secretary for India, nevertheless that deficit was arrived at after they had paid no less than £40,000,000 within the last 15 years for purposes which in all other countries were not debited to current revenue at all, but ordinarily to loans—such expenditure, for instance, as that incurred for famine-relief, for irrigation works, for railways, for the prevention of the consequences of drought, and for various other beneficent purposes. Looking at all those things he said that they might be of good cheer. As an old finance Minister, he said that the limits of taxation in India were not yet reached, notwithstanding all that had been said to the contrary in this debate. He hoped that they never would be; but if necessity should arise there was a margin left yet. The Income Tax was only 2½ per cent. It would bear much more, and it fell on the richer classes, who were better off in their way than our people were in these days of depression. Again, even after the recent alteration in the Salt Tax, the tax was lower in many parts of India than it was in his days and in those of his Predecessors. Finally, tobacco, which was taxed in most other countries, was untaxed in India. A Tobacco Tax had often been proposed but not imposed. He hoped that the necessity for it would never arise; but he repeated, the resources of civilization were not exhausted. If they had the enlightened opinion of that House, and of England outside of that House, consistently directed to the affairs of India, they had every reason still to hope that that Eastern Empire might continue to be what it was now—the envy of all nations and the admiration of the world.

SIR UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH (Lancashire, Clitheroe) said, the course which the debate had taken was such that it would not be necessary for him to detain the House for more than a very few minutes. Indeed, he must ask the indulgence of the House, for he always felt a diffidence in speaking on Indian subjects, considering the very short time it had fallen to his lot to serve in the India Office. He felt that diffidence with especial force when he had to follow an hon. Gentleman of such great experience and knowledge of Indian affairs, and who had filled so distinguished a place in the Service of India as the hon. Gentleman the Member for Evesham (Sir Richard Temple), whose words on these subjects were entitled to the greatest weight and consideration. The hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Slagg) had said nothing with regard to that part of the Motion relating to the liquor traffic. As that had been the case in the hon. Member's speech, and as he (Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth), like the hon. Member, did not wish to make two speeches at a time, and, further, as the hon. Gentleman the Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) would probably have something to say on that part of the Motion dealing with the liquor traffic, he would confine himself to the portion on which his hon. Friend had dwelt. With regard to the Motion itself, he could not say that he was particularly enamoured of its form. To discuss two subjects on one Motion was not particularly convenient. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) had attacked the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Slagg) for the "partizan ferocity" of his speech; but he (Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth) did not think that that attack was deserved. He thought the hon. Member rather deserved the compliments which had been paid to him so graciously by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Evesham, and that the attack came with a particularly bad grace from the noble Lord, whose Indian Budget Speech of 1885 was fresh in the mind of the House as having been a new departure in the matter of Indian Budget Speeches. As to what had fallen from the hon. Gentleman the Member for Burnley with regard to the frontier of Upper Burmah, he had spoken as if an aggressive policy towards China—our old policy of forcing opium on that country, and making war for the opium trade—still existed. Those remarks at the present moment were rather unfortunate. The hon. Member had entirely left out of sight that they had now the Cheefoo Convention, and that the policy of England towards China had completely changed, and that now not only was there no fear of any dispute between England and China, but still less was there any fear of such follies as those which occurred in past years in respect of the opium trade. China was, fortunately, most friendly to India and to this country; and if they wanted strong evidence as to the good relations which existed at the present time between the Government of India and the Government of the Queen and China, it would be found in the speech that was made the other day—on the 3rd February—by the Viceroy of India to his Legislative Council, in which he had given some very interesting facts as to those happy relations. The Government of India had for some years been fully alive to the extreme importance of maintaining good relations between those two great Empires. He now passed on to the question of the North-West Frontier, and in regard to the speech of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington he should like to cite two or three of his remarks. The noble Lord had said, with a good deal of emphasis, that he thought that the Khojak Tunnel was a new question which should be discussed in that House. The question was certainly one on which the House might claim to have further information from the Under Secretary (Sir John Gorst). All the information given to them by the Under Secretary amounted to this—that the tunnel had been begun, and that it would be most valuable, as it would afford us the means of making a sortie; that was to say, that, like all our works in the direction of Quetta—railway and other works—this tunnel was of a defensive character, and that these works of a defensive character should be made in such a form as to enable us to strike a blow, if attacked, in the process of defending ourselves. There were, no doubt, two serious objections to any advance beyond the neighbourhood of Pishin and Quetta, and they were these. In the first place, there was the enormous expense of the tunnel that was in course of construction, and there was grave danger in incurring any expense which would add to the financial difficulties of India. Secondly, there was the danger that military men would be tempted to go further. He thought it would be satisfactory to the House if the Under Secretary, or someone on behalf of the Government, would give assurances to the House somewhat of the character of those volunteered unofficially by the hon. Member for Evesham—assurances that there was no intention on the part of the Government of going beyond our present frontier, and that the Indian Government did not intend, under present circumstances, to carry their railway to Candahar. Then he came to another remark of the noble Lord's, and he noted with satisfaction that he also regarded the great expenditure upon railways at Quetta and Pishin as having been undertaken for defensive and not for aggressive purposes. The noble Lord had then gone on to lay great stress on the truth of the phrase contained in the Motion before the House—"grave financial difficulties." He had said that the financial situation was most grave, and had called attention to the fact that the Famine Fund had gone. He had also called attention to the raising of the Salt Tax, and had said that nothing was more startling, as it was the only resource in case of war or great emergency. He had also said that the Indian Government had got to the end of their resources. The noble Lord might have been using exaggerated language to enforce his views; but, whether or not, the words would have been listened to with surprise by the House, coming, as they did, from the author of the policy which had led to the addition of 10,000 English soldiers to the Indian Army and a consequent large addition of Native troops. It was satisfactory to hear the hon. Gentleman the Member for Evesham say that it was possible to go back from the step which had been taken in the direction of increasing the Indian Army, and that he was prepared to urge the Government to consider whether or not the Indian Army should be reduced. If they did not reduce it the noble Lord must be held responsible for a step which had landed the Government of India in a large and permanent increase in the expenditure, which was a thing he had himself described as one of the greatest dangers to India. The European troops in India before the noble Lord's time numbered 60,000, and to that number the noble Lord had added 10,000, besides having made a large addition to the Native Army. He (Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth) heartily welcomed—and he was sure that all who were impressed with the absolute necessity for the military and political safety of India of practising far greater economy in Indian administration and Indian finance also welcomed most heartily—the noble Lord as a recruit to the ranks of Indian economists. The Under Secretary had spoken of the political effect of our pacific frontier policy, and had said we were now in peace and friendship with all the independent tribes between Afghanistan and British India. He (Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth) thought the hon. Member might have gone still further, and have called attention to the remarkable facts which were published in the Blue Book lately presented to the House as to the welcome given to Sir West Ridgeway's Commission on its return from the North-West Frontier of Afghanistan—the way the members of the Commission were received by the Ameer and the officers and soldiers of the Army and the people of the country, the freedom with which they were able to move about Cabul and to visit its environs. As Sir West Ridgeway had said, they were "treated with the greatest kindness and consideration." He (Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth) ventured to claim that among many causes which had contributed to the increased friendliness of the Ameer and the altered relations between the British people and the Afghan people, was the policy which was pursued after the change in 1880 by the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) when he withdrew from Candahar and satisfied the people of Afghanistan that we had no selfish motives and no desire to annex any part of Afghanistan, and that having gone there for certain purposes, and having effected all that was necessary, we were prepared at once to retire. Now, the question was, how were we to preserve this friendliness? It had always been held of the greatest importance that we should have a strong, independent, and friendly Afghanistan. It might be open to some debate how far Afghanistan could be strong and how far she could be independent; but it was now proved that it was possible to have a friendly Afghanistan. There was one thing he would venture to press on the Government — though he did not know whether it was necessary to press it upon them, and earnestly hoped that it was not. The Under Secretary had given them no information on the point. The conviction of many hon. Members on the Opposition side of the House, and he believed on the other side also—it was certainly the conviction of the hon. Member who had just sat down—was this—and this was the point he would press on the Government—that if they were to preserve the friendliness of Afghanistan they must not advance into that country; they must not only not annex any part of it, but must keep strictly within their own boundary. They must beware of going to Candahar whilst the present good relations with Russia prevailed, and they must endeavour to keep prominently before their minds that friendliness with Afghanistan was of the greatest military and political importance to India. He would only say, in conclusion, that whatever military measures might be presented to the Government of India which they might be tempted to embark in, it was their duty always to remember that the advantage of any military measure should be weighed against the serious danger of adding to the financial burdens of the country, and that the increase of expenditure was the greatest peril to our Empire.

MR. J. M. MACLEAN (Oldham) said, he thought they on the Ministerial side of the House might be content to rest their case on the picturesque and masterly speech delivered by the hon. Member for Evesham. That speech, he thought, covered nearly the whole ground which had been occupied by the Mover of the Resolution in bringing his proposal before the House. But in addition to the speech of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Evesham, this debate had been memorable for the speech of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill). That speech had been remarkable for breadth of view, and, as usual, for great vigour and clearness of expression, but what was principally noticeable in it was a declaration which had not been touched on by any speaker, official or non-official, on the Ministerial side of the House. The noble Lord had said—and the declaration had been received with cheers by the opposite side of the House—that "finance depends on policy," and he had gone on to elaborate and develop that maxim by tracing all the trouble and annoyance which Russia had given us in Asia, and which had led to this great increase in our military expenditure in India, to the mistaken policy of this country in engaging in the Crimean War; and the noble Lord had gone on to say that if this country abstained from opposing the interests which Russia had in Europe, then Russia would not use the means which she now possessed of concentrating large forces on the frontier of India in order to render us uneasy about the maintenance of our Indian Empire. Now, he (Mr. J. M. Maclean) ventured as an independent Member of the Conservative Party to enter a gentle protest against what he conceived to be the drift of this important political statement on the part of the noble Lord. He ventured to say that Great Britain had important national and commercial interests to defend in the South-East of Europe and the Mediterranean quite as great and as dear to the people of this country as were even the interests of our Indian Empire, and he did not think it would be a right policy for a great nation like this to pursue to abandon our interests in the Mediterranean and the South-East of Europe in the vain hope of preserving India from the danger of invasion. Depend upon it, that if we gave up our ancient policy in the Mediterranean and the South-East of Europe in this way, instead of saving our interests in India, we should only encourage Russia to further aggression in Asia. The right policy for a great nation to pursue was to defend her interests everywhere. And what did experience teach us? Why, that it was only by showing a firm front to Russia that we could make her desist from those aggressive courses upon which the martial spirit and swarming instincts of her people compelled her to enter. The very arrangement which had been come to with Russia in regard to our frontier in Central Asia was conclusive evidence on that point. When we retired from Candahar, did that induce Russia to forbear making any further advance in Central Asia? On the contrary, she pushed forward quickly, first to Merv and then to Penjdeh, and it was then that the Party opposite began to discover the danger that there was in Russia's designs. For a long time previously many Members of the Liberal Party used to taunt the Conservatives with what the Duke of Argyll called fits of Mervousness; but as soon as Russia got to Merv and advanced to Herat, the Duke himself was the first to acknowledge that the British Empire had at last got an inland frontier to defend, and that it would be necessary for us to incur great expense and make extensive arrangements to confront new dangers. He (Mr. J. M. Maclean) would not go over the events which happened up to the time that the Convention with Russia for the demarcation of the boundary across Asia was concluded; but he would say this, that it was the firm policy of Lord Salisbury's Government that compelled Russia at last to pause and come to some fair agreement with regard to the Afghan Frontier. The Prime Minister had recently in the House of Lords borne testimony to the straightforward and conciliatory manner in which Russia had acted in settling this frontier; and it seemed to him (Mr. J. M. Maclean) that it was a great mistake for people to say that the agreement which had been arrived at only constituted a "paper boundary," which it would be easy for the Russian forces to cross at any time. Why, what had been the great danger which had beset us in Central Asia? It had been the fact that the frontier was unsettled, and that raids on one side and the other could be easily made on whatever pretext presented itself. But now Russia had accepted a certain line of frontier, and that established our legal right to defend it against any advance on the part of Russia, who had repeatedly, from the time of Prince Gortschakoff, stated that she regarded Afghanistan as beyond her sphere of influence, and as falling within the sphere of British influence in Asia. We had now the frontier properly defined, and the slightest sign on the part of Russia of an intention to depart from it would give us a clear right to interfere for the defence of Afghanistan. That was one great security which we had obtained so far as the Western and Northern Frontier of Afghanistan was concerned. Well, then, we also had to provide for what might happen in the case of war. We had to determine where our troops should be stationed in order, if necessary, to advance on Afghanistan for the protection of our allies there. He thought the hon. Member for Evesham and the Under Secretary were rather inclined to minimize the real advance which had been made in the adoption of a scientific frontier and the organization of means to defend it in India. The hon. Member for Evesham had spoken of Beloochistan and Quetta as always being under British influence. Yes; but we had not always large forces of our own troops stationed there, and we had not always a railway, circumstances which constituted a distinct and substantial change from the policy which the hon. Member himself upheld when he was a Member of Lord Lawrence's Council in India. It was useful for us to recognize that there had always been two opposing policies advocated by eminent and distinguished men on both sides of the House in regard to the defences of our Indian Frontier. One was known as the "Forward" policy, and the other as the "Standstill" policy. One school of politicians said that we should wait in the Indus Valley, and never advance beyond the mountains at all, which was very much the same thing as saying that the best way in which a man could defend his house when attacked by burglars would be by going and hiding himself in the coal cellar. On the other hand there was the "Forward" school, who wished to go to Candahar or Herat, or even beyond it. The present system of frontier defence was, he took it, a compromise. It had been accepted by both parties as a compromise between these two extreme views. We had laid down railways up to the formidable Bolan Pass. We had fortified all the other passes leading to India, and we were now trying to pierce the last great obstacle which existed to prevent a military force from advancing upon Candahar. Some trouble had been taken with regard to this proposed tunnel through the Amram Range to make out what we were doing there was entirely within our own territory. The Under Secretary of State had said we were only making this tunnel in order that if it should become necessary our troops might make a sortie into Afghanistan. But if one end of the tunnel was on British territory, surely the other was in Afghanistan.

Sir JOHN GORST: No; the hon. Member is mistaken. Both ends of the tunnel would be on British territory.

Mr. J. M. MACLEAN said, that even in that case it was a formidable new advance for the Government to undertake. It seemed to him idle to affect to believe that when this tunnel had been made at the cost of £1,500,000 sterling, it was not to be used at all except in case we required to make a sortie on Quetta—in case our own territory was assailed by an enemy. He would much rather take the larger view of what we were doing beyond the frontier there. He would say frankly that we were making a tunnel in order that we might extend our railways into Afghanistan and as far as Candahar. The hon. Member for Evesham had told them what many connected with India often heard from the officers employed there — namely, that since we had begun to construct this railway a good effect had been produced on the frontier tribes. The fact was, we had spent a large amount of money on these frontier works, and, therefore, it was not strange that we never heard of any raids being committed by the barbarous tribes on the frontier, who used to be so turbulent. The reason was plain. These barbarians were not men who liked war merely for the sake of fighting; they did it in order to get food to eat, and if we went amongst them and distributed large sums of money, paying them such wages as they never received before, it was not to be wondered that a good effect was produced on the national character, and that they were reconciled to English civilization. It was very much the same thing as formerly went on in the Scottish Highlands at the end of the 17th century, of whom hon. Members would remember Baillie Nichol Jarvie said, "What was it that kept the Highlands quiet in those times? It was siller, Sir; siller." There is no doubt that the Indian rupee had the same effect upon these tribes. If that was the effect of these works of peace, why should not we, if we were so welcome to the Afghans, and if they were so well-disposed towards us, ask the Ameer to encourage the extension of railways into his own territory as far as Candahar? He looked on this line not merely as a military line which we had constructed up the Bolan Pass, but as the first part of a great Indo-European line of railway which would be constructed some day across Asia to carry Engligh mails and passengers to Bombay and Calcutta. To his mind there was nothing which should make Englishmen more ashamed of themselves — men who used to take the initiative in all enterprizes of this kind—than to think that Russia had laid down a railway across Asia as far as Bokhara. It was 15 years ago since a Committee of the House of Commons passed a Resolution in favour of giving a British guarantee to a Company to construct a railway through the Euphrates Valley to the head of the Persian Gulf, and not a sod of this railway had been cut, whilst the Russians, in the meantime, had laid down a line, as he had said, across the Continent, and through arid districts which had been regarded as impracticable. The construction of a trans-Asiatic railway ought to become to England one of the first necessities of the day, and he agreed with what the noble Lord the Member for Paddington had said, that if the further extension of our railway frontier system into Afghanistan was to be carried out, then we ought to consider whether Indian finances ought to bear the whole strain of the increased expenditure. It would be an interesting question to have discussed by a Committee of the House, What was the position of India in what might be called the Imperial Federation? He could not help thinking that India was treated very much worse by us than were our Colonies in regard to all questions of the defence of the Empire, and if a Committee of the House were to go into the question thoroughly, he thought it would be found that the people of this country would not grudge the expenditure even of a large sum of money for the purpose of completing overland communication with India, and in order to give the people of this country the advantages which the Russians were about to possess for themselves. But, meanwhile, we had to consider the question of the actual effect of what the hon. Gentleman the Member for Burnley (Mr. Slagg) called "our new frontier policy" in increasing the taxation of the people of India. Well, he must say that he thought that the noble Lord the Member for Paddington took far too gloomy a view of the present financial state of India. The noble Lord had spoken as if India were on the eve of bankruptcy. The hon. Member for the Evesham Division of Worcestershire had given very wise reasons to show that this was not the case, and he (Mr. J. M. Maclean) might point out, in addition to the reasons that the hon. Member had given, that a great part of the expenditure which had caused an increase of taxation had taken place once for all. We had made these frontier railways; we had established these camps; we had paid enormous sums of money in nearly perfecting the scientific defence of our frontier, and that expenditure would not have to be incurred again. In the same way we might fairly hope that the great expenditure on the Army now maintained in Burmah would soon come to an end—that our troops, or a great proportion of them, would be released from service in that country, and that, in that way, a great source of expenditure would be stopped. Well, if that was the case, we might fairly expect to get back to the state of things which existed before the present year, when the Salt Tax was increased. Hon. Members opposite always seemed to forget that the increase of the Salt Tax was only going back to what was the state of taxation before Lord Ripon reduced the Salt Tax some six years ago. In fact, if the Salt Tax had not been reduced then, causing a loss to the Revenue of India at first of £1,500,000 and afterwards of £1,000,000 a-year for several years, there would have been enough money from the existing taxation of the country to pay for nearly the whole of the frontier defences. Lord Ripon had chosen to leave the money in the pockets of the people. He had thought there was no harm to be apprehended from Russia, and went to sleep in his Elysium at Simla until he was suddenly awakened by a thrust from a Cossack lance to the necessity of doing something to protect our frontier from the invasion of Russia. The Salt Tax had been discussed a good deal, both in the present debate and in the debate which took place a week or two ago by the hon. Member for Burnley and the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith), a Gentleman whose credulity was as unbounded as the goodness of his heart, and who, when he went to India, was apparently passed on—like the delegates who went to Ireland—from one set of Indian Home Rulers to another, until he came back crammed to the eyes full of their views and opinions that India was being destroyed by English rule, and if they did not give her Home Rule the natives would not be able to live from one day to another. He (Mr. J. M. Maclean) had heard that statement made from gentlemen like the hon. Member for the last 25 years. India had been on the verge of bankruptcy every day during the whole of that period. Meanwhile the prosperity and standard of living in that country had been rising. In all outward show the prosperity of India would compare favourably with any country in the world at the present moment, and he did not think that the present slight increase in the Salt Tax would cause any appreciable burden to the Natives. It was stated that the Natives would prefer to return to the duties on cotton goods rather than have this Salt Tax; and the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington had spoken of the cruel wrong done to the people of India by the repeal of the Cotton Duties. Was the noble Lord of opinion that these Cotton Duties were paid by the manufacturers in Lancashire? If he was, he was labouring under a mistake, for, as a matter of fact, they were paid by the people who wore the clothing in India. It was a heavier tax upon them to pay these duties on their clothing than it was to pay a fractional part of a fraction of a farthing for the pinch of salt which they eat every day. There was no comparison between the two modes of taxation; and another thing was that the people of India were accustomed to paying the Salt Duty, and disliked any strange form of taxation. The hon. Member for Barrow (Mr. Caine) said he was told by millowners out there—by very wealthy men—that they preferred a duty upon cotton goods, and that they themselves would be ready to submit to a corresponding Excise Tax on cotton of their own manufacture. No doubt they would. The rich inhabitants of India were all fond of indirect taxation; they would prefer that to an Income Tax. Free Trade had been called "The creed of enlightened selfishness," but Protection was certainly the creed of unenlightened selfishness, and was found all through India. The Natives were everywhere Protectionists. In the administration of the great city of Bombay he had always found that it was impossible to get wealthy Natives to vote for anything like direct taxes on their houses. They always wanted to put taxes on the commodities consumed by the whole community. For these reasons he thought that the Salt Tax would really give far less offence to the people of India—if that was what was desired—than would any other tax that could possibly be imposed, and he trusted that the increase which had now been made in it would be sufficient for the purpose for which it was imposed, and that if any further extension of our frontier defences was required, the whole question as to whether the cost should be paid entirely by the people of India, or whether we should pay it ourselves, would be considered by the House of Commons.

SIR EDWARD HAMLEY (Birkenhead) said, he would not attempt to follow hon. Members opposite along the mysterious path by which they had sought to connect fortifications with morals, and the liquor traffic with the defence of the Empire; but he would endeavour to show that our frontier system was not that absurd and extravagant policy which they would have us believe. The hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Slagg) thought we ought to defend India within its own frontier. He (Sir Edward Hamley) quite agreed that some years ago it might fairly have been maintained that the Indus, if not the best, was at any rate a sufficient frontier, for at that time we never took the Russian Army of the Caucasus into account. It was then behind the Caspian. Few ships traversed that sea, and the country between the Caspian and the Afghan frontier was, to a great extent, a barren waste, inhabited by hostile and warlike tribes of Turkomans. Therefore, we never took the Army of the Caucasus into account. Our attention was then fixed upon the Russian Army in Central Asia. It was a small army, and it was at a distance; and yet, small as it was and distant as it was, it managed to give us a remarkable warning. When the Congress of Berlin was sitting, Russia wished, for her own ends, to put pressure on England, and accordingly General Kauffmann, commander of the Russian forces in Central Asia, assembled a small Army on the frontiers of Bokhara, with the declared intention of marching to the frontier of Afghanistan. He preceded this march by an envoy to the Ameer of that time, and the envoy and the Ameer between them entered into a Treaty hostile to England, from which we continued to suffer for many years. This fact made it clear that Russia was prepared, whenever her policy needed it, to put pressure on England, through her Indian frontier, and that pressure would be enormously increased when, instead of a small Army operating from a distance, her vast resources would be brought to bear on us close at hand. Let us see what means Russia had of late years accumulated for the purpose. From Batoum, on the Black Sea, a railway now ran through the Caucasus to the Caspian, and the garrison of the Caucasus could easily put into the field an Army of 50,000 men, as was proved in the last war, and this Army of the Caucasus could be reinforced to any extent from Southern Russia. As to Northern Russia it was traversed by many canals and railways, which ran to different points on the Volga, which was the great waterway to the Caspian. Thus men and material could be concentrated to any extent on the Caspian. A few years ago there were few vessels on the Caspian; but now it was covered with steamers, owing to the great trade which had sprung up in the mineral oil with which the district abounded, and consequently troops could be transported to the other shore. On that shore there was a railway which had been persistently run towards the Afghan frontier, and the first point specially interesting to us which it reached was one end of the valley of the Heri Rud, at the other end of which stood the city of Herat. It was originally intended to push the railway along this valley, and if it was our present entrenched camp which had caused the design to be suspended, that work had already done us good service. Russia had then directed the railway upon Merv, whence it was continued to the Oxus, and was to be carried on through Bokhara to Samarcand; thus she would have the Army in Central Asia, and the Army in the Caucasus in direct communication with each other, and the whole of the forces in that country could be combined for a general advance upon the Afghan frontier. The people in the country were no longer hostile to Russia; they had been conquered, and they were willing to become her auxiliaries. General Skobeleff, who reduced them to submission, had left a memorandum respecting the invasion of India, in one passage of which he said he would propose to organize masses of Asiatic cavalry, and hurl them against the frontier of India under the banner of blood and rapine, and thus bring back the times of Tamerlane. He (Sir Edward Hamley) had no doubt that programme would have an attraction for those truculent horsemen, who had hitherto lived by violence and plunder, and the probabilities were, that if we should see the Russian army advancing upon India, it would be preceded by swarms of Turkoman cavalry. Considering these facts, it would be seen that Russia had had a great, a deliberate plan—a stupendous plan if they considered the extent of the space and the interests involved—a plan which she had been executing with astonishing constancy; and whatever else might be thought about Russia, they must admit that she seemed to be a Power that knew her own mind. If we were to let her alone and allow her to do as she pleased, the chances were that if she found occasion to threaten our frontier, she would begin by an invasion of Afghanistan, and when she had possessed herself of the three corner cities of Herat, Cabul, and Candahar, she would in the space between them proceed to create an advanced base of operations, by filling it with immense supplies of men and material for a campaign against India. This was the problem that our Indian officers had had to face. The frontier of the Indus for the upper half of its length had beyond it a great mass of mountain country, pierced only by passes 200 or 300 miles long; it thus formed a natural rampart, and so long as we watched the issues of the passes on the Indus an invader could only seek to penetrate there at his own peril. But the lower half of the frontier, down to Kurrachee, was a great plain stretching to Candahar. If we were to await Russia behind the Indus, we should certainly, in the event he was imagining, find her sending her troops across the plain, and should she succeed in placing herself on the river there she would sever our Army either from its base at Kurrachee, or from Bengal, which would be a most serious, and possibly a fatal, injury. Besides that, our Indian officers were agreed that nothing could be more dangerous than to sustain even the slightest reverse upon the soil of India. He had another authority to the same effect, and that was General Skobeleff—

> "Everybody," said Skobeleff, "who has concerned himself with the question of a Russian invasion of India would declare that it is only necessary to penetrate a single point of the Indian frontier to bring about a general rising. Even the presence of an insignificant force on the frontier of India might lead to a general rising throughout the country, and the collapse of the British Empire."

Not only was Skobeleff a great fighting soldier; he was a scientific soldier who well knew the politics of war. The hon. Member for Burnley was of a different opinion; but Indian officers thought with General Skobeleff that our line of defence should be pushed on, and it was fortunate that we had a country suited to carrying our resources forward from the Indus. The railway ran from Kurrachee up the bank of the Indus, meeting the railway coming from Calcutta and passing on, so that they would be able to concentrate on that point of junction at Sukkur the resources of Bengal on the one side, and the resources from England by Kurrachee on the other. From this point the railway ran on to beyond Pishin and Quetta, and they were now engaged in constructing an intrenched camp which would enable an Army there to defend itself against an enemy of much greater force, and to protect this important line of communication. The railway operations from Kurrachee to the frontier, and the defensive works in connection with them were a work of some finality, for they might hope that it would give tranquillity to India for generations. If the hon. Member for Burnley would candidly reconsider the case, he thought the hon. Member would see that with this short line from England to Kurrachee, and thence to the last point within our own frontier, we possessed admirable means for defending India. The Amram Range was only four or five marches from Candahar, and in case Russia should attempt to make a great advanced base of operations in Afghanistan, surely it would not be considered an offensive or aggressive movement on our part to endeavour to prevent her, and as we should be so much nearer to Candahar than she, we could always anticipate her. What an advantage it would be to transfer the war into a country which afforded admirable defensive positions, and to meet Russia with the support of our Afghan allies. That was not all that was to be said for this railway. When Sir Frederick Roberts and Sir Donald Stewart were making their campaign in Afghanistan, they drew their supplies of pack animals of all sorts from the neighbouring districts of India, and the destruction of those animals was shocking and horrible. Sir Donald Stewart, writing to him on the subject, said—

> "The experience of the last war proved conclusively that without railways the movement of large bodies of troops in the region before and adjoining the frontier becomes well nigh an impossibility. We contrived to get along, no doubt, but at what cost and at what sacrifice to human and animal life! It is appalling to think of the sacrifice of animals that the Afghan war cost us, and I doubt if the country has yet recovered these losses—I mean the loss of camels and pack animals."

He (Sir Edward Hamley) in fact believed there could be little doubt that the railway could have been made at less cost than the sacrifice of these animals. But that was not all, because the districts from which these animals were taken had not yet recovered the loss thereby entailed upon trade and agriculture. He trusted that there were many people in the House and the country who would consider that this decried frontier policy was really a wise and sagacious policy, that it was the reverse of aggressive, and that if we were to hold India at all it must be held by that plan, and by no other, and, as it was indispensable for the security of India, the best thing we could hope for was that it should be completed with all possible expedition.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) said, they were all indebted to his hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Slagg) for an interesting debate, though he was bound to admit that it would have been better if the Resolution had not linked together two subjects distinct from one another, each of which might well have occupied an evening. He had been much struck with the clearness of the speech of the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Birkenhead (Sir Edward Hamley); but he thought that exactly the same arguments which were used to explain the advance of Russia might be used to explain the steady advance of England in India. In reality it was not of set purpose that the English had conquered India: they had been led on to conquer it; and the same was largely true of Russia in Central Asia. He refused to believe that our officers and civilians in India were really of opinion that the appearance of Russia on the frontier would be the signal for a general insurrection. To believe that would be to cast an unjust and unworthy reflection upon the loyalty of our Indian fellow-subjects. There was no ground for saying that there would be general disaffection even if Russia were at the gates of the Suliman range. But whatever the views of Members individually might be, either with regard to the purposes of Russia or with regard to the loyalty of our Indian subjects, they all agreed that the North-West Frontier of India ought to be put into the same condition of defence as if it was certain that Russia desired to attack it, and that a revolt in our rear might be dreaded. But the question which they had now to ask themselves was whether they would be justified in sanctioning the expenditure of £1,500,000 for the purpose of piercing the Khojak Tunnel. That was an expenditure which the revenues of India could scarcely bear, and it must also be borne in mind that when we should have reached the level plain leading to Candahar the temptation to go on to Candahar itself would be almost irresistible, and the dangers and responsibilities, political as well as military, of such an advance would be very great indeed. Those were the two main grounds upon which hon. Members objected to this expenditure of £1,500,000. The view of the House in 1881—a view affirmed by a large majority—ought not to be forgotten. It was that the political results of the occupation of Candahar and of the consequent breaking up of Afghanistan would be far too serious to be lightly faced, and would outweigh any advantages that might accrue from such a course of action. In connection with the subject of the Indian liquor traffic, he wished to lay before the House some facts relating to the attempts to introduce the use of liquors into Upper Burmah. Under the Native Monarchs the use both of opium and of ardent spirits was prohibited in accordance with the precepts of Buddhism, and nothing was more rare than to see a drunken person in the street. The few Chinese who were under Native jurisdiction were allowed to smoke opium and consume liquor, but the prohibition was enforced in the case of the Burmese themselves, and practically there was no consumption of liquor before we annexed the country. After the annexation in 1886 it was found that money was wanted, and the idea occurred to British officials of introducing the system of licensing the sale of spirits and granting a monopoly of opium. The officers in charge of districts in Upper Burmah were consulted by the Government, and they returned answers adverse to the proposal—they advised that it would be better to leave things as they were. He had been assured on high authority that the Native view was also opposed to the plan. This took place early last year, and as far back as April last, in spite of the advice given by the officers, a certain number of licences were issued for the sale of spirits and opium. He questioned the India Office in July last, and was promised information, but none had been so far given. Returns on the subject were ordered by the House last August. Recently he (Mr. Bryce) addressed some questions relating to this matter to the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst), who, however, did not appear to have received any additional information. The House had reason to complain of this inordinate delay, which, however, he did not believe to be owing to the Office at home, but to some functionaries in India, who seemed to desire to keep the House of Commons in the dark in regard to this subject. It was said that these licences were to be granted in order to regulate the traffic, but it did not appear to him that the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for India had met the case of his hon. Friend the Member for Barrow (Mr. Caine). If the licences tended to diminish the consumption, how was it that the consumption steadily increased? It appeared to him that in Upper Burmah, at any rate, it was the pressure of the cost of administration and the desire to relieve the Central Government of India which led to the expedient of granting licences being resorted to. He hoped that the India Office had been frank and candid in saying that revenue was no part of the object in the granting these licences. But what, then, was the motive? Why, in Upper Burmah, did the British officers in charge of districts, as well as the Native Burmese, object if the tendency was to diminish consumption? It must have been because they feared that the introduction of the Indian licence system would have the effect of stimulating the use of opium and spirits. The House used to hear a great deal before we annexed Burmah about the massacres by King Thebaw and the tyranny and oppression that went on under the Native Kings of Burmah; but the harm done by a King of Burmah during the whole of his reign would not be as great as the demoralization of the people, which seemed likely to be introduced by this licence system. This was not a case in which there was any danger of illicit manufacture or sale to apprehend from refusing the licences, because—as he had said—before the annexation there was little or no consumption amongst the Natives of spirits or opium. Therefore this country was open to the reproach of introducing vices which were scarcely known before. He trusted the matter would have the serious attention of the Government, and that hon. Members recognizing the heavy responsibility that lay upon England in regard to these comparatively weak Indo-Chinese races, would do their utmost to prevent the traffic both in opium and in spirits from taking root in our newly-conquered territories.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.) said, he thought that it would not be necessary for him to do more than answer one or two of the questions which had been raised in the course of the discussion since the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) spoke, because he considered that the Motion of the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Slagg) had been pretty effectually disposed of by speakers who had preceded him. In his (Sir James Fergusson's) opinion the Motion in itself was one of the strangest which had ever been put on the Motion Paper of the House. It contained irreconcilable matters and an absolute fallacy. He had observed that the hon. Member had given Notice of a Motion of a simple character—namely, to call attention to the frontier policy of the Government, and to move a Resolution with regard to the existing financial difficulties. That morning, however, the matter of intoxicating liquors had been introduced, and this was absolutely fatal to the logical character of the Motion, since this excise was of a local character and devoted to local objects, and so could not have anything to do with the frontier policy of the Government. But matters had emerged from the somewhat common place level at which they had been left by the hon. Gentleman the Mover of this Motion. The Motion of the hon. Member had elicited some interesting speeches from great Indian authorities, and he ventured also to hope that the effect of these speeches would be to remove from the mind of the hon. Member some deeply-rooted prejudices which he had expressed, not for the first time. The hon. Member seemed to think that the Government of India did not exist or labour for the benefit of the Natives of India, that their policy was founded on prejudice and carried on in a spirit contrary to the true interests of the Natives.

MR. SLAGG said, he never said anything of the kind.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said, that such was the purport of the hon. Member's speech. With regard to the frontier policy of the Government, the hon. Member wholly disapproved it. The hon. Member was under this misfortune, that he believed that the Government had carried their railway into Afghanistan, and that they were at this moment occupying that country. That belief had been shown by the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India to be absolutely unfounded. We were well within our own frontier; and in answer to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Clitheroe Division of Lancaster (Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth), who had put the question, he would say that there was no question of having any intention to cross the British frontier. They had established communications which made that frontier a strong one, but without any intention of passing beyond that frontier. He contended that there was not the slightest ground for the idea that in strengthening the frontier of India we were either holding out a defiance to any other Power or manifesting any distrust of the intentions of any other Power. They did not express any distrust of the honesty or good faith of their neighbours by putting their frontier in a proper state of defence. They did not express distrust of their neighbours in France because they maintained forts at Dover. No country would be wise if it did not maintain its frontiers in such a state of defence that at all times it would be prepared for any emergency which might occur. It was absolutely contrary to the policy of Her Majesty's Government and the Government of India to say that the construction of a well-defined scientific frontier was any defiance to, or expressed any mistrust of, any other nation in the world. But in the last few years, when it had been necessary to strengthen the defences of India, the public credit had been greatly improved thereby and very gratifying results had followed. Some of the great feudatories of the Empire had made expressions of loyalty and offers of support of which he thought this country was very sensible, and which went far to prove that our government of India had not been distasteful to the Natives of India. The admirable speeches of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Evesham Division of Worcester (Sir Richard Temple), himself a great Indian statesman, and of the hon. and gallant Member for Birkenhead (Sir Edward Hamley), a great scientific soldier, had placed this question upon a just footing, and shown that the Government of India was not narrow or short-sighted, but far-reaching and statesmanlike. He (Sir James Fergusson) did not think anything had been said to give any support to the purport of the Motion which had been moved, to the effect that that House mistrusted the frontier policy of the Government of India. It was true that there had been an increase of expenditure on account of these precautions. It was a pity they had not been taken sooner, because, to his personal knowledge, the burdens on the resources of India had been largely caused by the want of railways which were now completed. In 1885, when certain precautionary measures had been necessary, immense expenses had been incurred for the transport of troops which would have been avoided if railways had existed then which existed now. The construction of these railways had enormously strengthened the resources of India. He would have been glad to have avoided the bathos of reverting to the Excise question; but he was compelled to notice the remarks of the hon. Member for South Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce), who had somewhat unjustly referred to the measures of the Government of India with respect to Burmah. The hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India had not been able to inform the House fully as to the licences to be given in Burmah, and he might add that the Government of India had given stringent orders that no opium licences were to be given in Burmah, except in parts where there was a Chinese population. There was a distinct difference between the encouragement and the regulation of the sale of liquor. It was only a question whether the sale of opium and liquor should be under regulation or not. Therefore, giving licences to places where there were no Burmans was not, as had been represented, encouraging the Burmans to practices from which they were happily free. The hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. Samuel Smith) had quoted from a pamphlet on India which he had endorsed in a preface, and in which the writer quoted an official despatch purporting to come from the Secretary of State to the Government of India, in which it was questioned whether the temperance movement should be permitted to spread. The Papers before Parliament showed that the expressions attributed to the Secretary of State were from a despatch of the Acting Commissioner of Customs to the Chief Secretary, and it was not stated that this was a temperance movement, but a strike against the high rate of licences on liquor and spirits imposed by the Government of Bombay. Those interested in the profits from the sale of spirits at a cheaper rate, disliking the high rate of duty, had intimidated people into refusing to use spirits. Hon. Members who spent a month in India should be cautious in taking up ideas and believing stories against Englishmen who were administering the affairs of the country under very great difficulties, and, he believed, with a high sense of duty and every desire to ameliorate the condition of the people. To his personal knowledge they had accomplished with very scanty means a great deal in the cause of the amelioration of the condition of the people of India, and he would ask the House to reject decisively the Motion of the hon. Member for Burnley.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh S.) said, that before the Motion went to a Division, he should like to explain the way in which he regarded it. Two days ago, two distinct Motions were before the House—one by the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Slagg), raising the whole question of the frontier policy of India, and the other by the hon. Member for Barrow (Mr. Caine) calling the attention of the House to what had happened in connection with the liquor traffic. He (Mr. Childers) would have supported the Motion of the hon. Member for Barrow; but now the two Motions on entirely different questions had been merged into one, and the way in which frontier policy and the liquor traffic were now mixed up placed him in a somewhat difficult position. He could not vote for a Motion in which they were asked to condemn, as unwise, our frontier policy. As one who was responsible for our Indian policy two or three years ago, it was impossible for him to condemn the frontier policy, as settled then and but slightly modified since, as unwise. The declaration which had just been made by the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that the railway, although carried through the Khojak Tunnel, would not pass beyond the Indian frontier, took away any doubt he might have had as to these recent modifications, and he therefore must abstain from supporting his hon. Friend (Mr. Slagg).

Sir ROPER LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.) rose to address the House, when—

Mr. CAINE rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question, "That the Question be now put," put accordingly, and *agreed to.*

Question put.

"That, in the opinion of this House, the unwise Frontier Policy of the Government of India is producing grave financial difficulties in that country, leading not only to increased burdens of taxation, but to the extension of the sale of intoxicating liquors for Revenue purposes, with serious results to the moral and material welfare of the people."—*(Mr. Slagg.)*

The House *divided:*—Ayes 72; Noes 122: Majority 50.—(Div. List, No. 37.)

PAUPER LUNATICS' ASYLUMS (IRELAND) OFFICERS SUPERANNUATION BILL.—[BILL 135.]

(*Mr. Johnston, Mr. Chance.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*Mr. Johnston.*)

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): I object.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I appeal to the hon. and learned Member for North Longford to use his influence with the hon. Gentleman.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I would ask my hon. Friend not to persist in his opposition to this Bill.

MR. BIGGAR: I object, Sir.

Committee *deferred* till *Thursday*.

FISHERY ACTS AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL.—[BILL 32.]

(*Colonel Nolan, Mr. E. Harrington, Mr. P. M'Donald, Mr. Foley.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.), in moving that the House go into Committee, said, he accepted the Amendment which the Government had put upon the Paper.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*Colonel Nolan.*)

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I object, Sir.

Committee *deferred* till *To-morrow*.

ARMY ESTIMATES.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to examine into the Army Estimates, and to report their observations thereon to the House.—(*Mr Secretary Stanhope.*)

NAVY ESTIMATES.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to examine into the Navy Estimates, and to report their observations thereon to the House.—(*Lord George Hamilton.*)

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to examine into the Estimates for the Revenue Departments, and to report their observations to the House.—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

House adjourned at ten minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 14*th March*, 1888.

MINUTES.] — SELECT COMMITTEE — *First Report*—Public Accounts [No. 87].

PRIVATE BILL (*by Order*)—*Second Reading* — Thames Tunnel (Blackwall).*

PUBLIC BILLS — *Ordered* — *First Reading* — Parliamentary Voters* [171].

Second Reading—Oaths [7]; Metropolis Local Government* [14], *deferred.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

OATHS BILL.—[BILL 7.]

(*Mr Bradlaugh, Sir John Simon, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Courtney Kenny, Mr. Burt, Mr. Coleridge, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. Richard, Colonel Eyre, Mr. Jesse Collings.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton), in rising to move that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that it consisted only of two clauses, expressed in almost the same language as that which was used in the Affirmation Act for Quakers. The only difference was that it had been suggested to him that he should make it differ from the Affirmation Act, which applied to the Society of Friends, by introducing words to provide that the initiative should be taken by the person who desired to have an opportunity of affirming. To meet that suggestion, which did not appear to him to be unreasonable, he had introduced the words, in the first line in the clause—"Upon objecting to being sworn." He wished now to point out, as briefly as he could, the class of persons whom the Bill touched, and the class of grievances it was intended to remedy. In the first place, as the law now stood, in reference to jurors, jurors who were without religious belief, or who, having religious belief, did not believe in future rewards and punishments, when summoned as jurors, could neither take the oath nor affirm. There was no provision to allow a person, under those circumstances, to affirm, except the provision which related to jurors who had religious belief, and that was clearly marked. He did not know that it would be necessary to make any long statement on that point. The law was clearly put by Lord Bramwell, in 1881, when he said that the class of persons mentioned in Section 4 of the Act of 1869—namely, that persons who at that time would be incompetent, but for that Act, to give evidence owing to want of religious belief—that such persons should not be permitted to serve on juries on condition of merely making a solemn declaration or affirmation, instead of taking the oath. That view was concurred in by the Lords Justices of Appeal. Suppose a juror without religious belief to have been sworn by mistake, or because the matter had not been brought to the knowledge of the Court; suppose a juror to have affirmed under what might be called the Religious Belief Clause, then it was quite clear that in a criminal trial error might be brought after conviction and sentence, and a murderer might escape punishment. The law upon that point was very clear, and he did not wish to labour the matter. In 1838 Lord Denman, moving, in the House of Lords, a Bill for the substitution of Affirmations for Oaths, drew attention to a defect which was remedied soon after, in which Dr. Cooke, a Presbyterian clergyman in Ireland, had insisted on being sworn according to the manner in which the Presbyterians thought the oath binding on them; but he had not been sworn in the usual method required by law. The point was raised after conviction and after sentence, and the objection was sustained. The consequence was that the prisoner who was convicted in that case escaped the sentence which had been passed upon him. During the last three years there had been a large number of jurors who, being without religious belief, or, at any rate, claiming to be without religious belief, had been ordered to stand aside. They were persons summoned to serve and sit as jurymen, and when they *bonâ fide* brought the matter under the notice of the Court, or made a claim to be exempt on the ground of having no religious belief, they were able to escape the performance of their duty. In either case, it was equally bad for the rest of the public that these men were not allowed to act as jurymen. They could not affirm, and they could not take the oath. It had been held beyond the possibility of question by the High Court of Justice sitting at Bar, by their Judges, and affirmed on appeal, that if a person without religious belief did, what he could not call "take the oath," but, adopting the words used by the Judges, if he went through the form of taking the oath, however regularly it might be administered to those who went through the form, it would not be the taking of the oath, because the person to whom it was administered was incapable of taking it. It was to avoid the possible consequence of that state of things that he would appeal even to those who took a somewhat hostile view of the Bill, whether legislation on this question would not be wise, so as to avoid the serious effect of error being alleged after the conclusion of a trial? There was, however, another view of it which appeared to him to be even more painful. A grave doubt often arose, especially in Coroners' Courts, where a deputy Coroner was sitting, as to whether persons summoned as jurymen were entitled to affirm or not, and occasionally squabbles occurred on matters of religious opinion. He thought he was within the mark in saying that he had noted within the last two or three years some 20 or 30 such cases, and he had brought some of them before the House in the form of questions to the hon. and learned Attorney General. Sometimes the deputy Coroner decided in one way, and sometimes in another, and great suffering was thus often entailed on the relatives of the deceased who were awaiting the inquest. He would suggest to the House that this was a reason, if other things were reasonable, why there should be a disposition to make the law clear on the point. In regard to jurors, he would put the matter in this way: Jurors without religious belief, or jurors having religious belief of some kind, who yet did not believe in future rewards and punishment, were by law incapable of taking the oath, and were not by law permitted to affirm. Leaving that class, he came next to cases connected with the Oath of Allegiance. In that case, there was no provision made by the law for affirming at all, except for Quakers, Moravians, and Separatists. A Christian, in the fullest sense of the word, who conscientiously objected to take the oath on the ground he had heard many Christians put forward, that oath taking was unlawful by the terms of their own creed--such persons were not entitled to affirm their allegiance. There was no provision for a case of that kind in our law at all, and yet the Oath was taken not only by Members of Parliament and Justices of the Peace, but by the barristers, solicitors, a variety of constables, officers, and the rank and file in the Army, and both warrant and petty officers in the Navy. He would point out a very serious difficulty which had arisen in connection with Justices of the Peace. There was a decision of the Court of Appeal, confirming that of the Court of Three Judges, and, for the purposes of debate that day, that decision of the Court of Appeal must be assumed to be good law. It was a decision of Judges of the very highest eminence, and was used by the present Lord Chief Justice of England and two other Judges sitting at Bar. The decision, with the arguments, had been reported, and might be found in the Library of the House, and its effect was that a Justice of the Peace who was without religious belief could not have the oath administered to him, and consequently his acts were open to challenge in a variety of ways; ways with which he need not trouble the House at length. If that decision were good, any soldier who fell within that category could not be properly attested, the administration of the oath being legally required. He need hardly enlarge on the serious inconvenience which would follow a decision of that effect. He had no wish to deal with the matter simply from the point of view of the Oath of Allegiance as taken at the Table of the House. He was happy to say that he was able to move the second reading of the Bill as no longer a Party measure. It had upon its back the endorsement of Members sitting on both sides of the House. It was within his own knowledge that a very large number of Members on the opposite Benches considered this measure a fair and proper solution of an extremely difficult problem, and he trusted that it might be dealt with and settled now without a particle of bitterness, or even of recollection. There had necessarily been present to his mind the consideration of objections which Members might fairly feel in dealing with such a measure as this. In the first instance, he would point out that the whole tendency of the legislation of this country for the last six years had been to diminish oaths as much as possible, and to abolish a great many oaths that were once considered necessary, substituting for them, in cases of testimony, affirmations which could carry with them all the legal consequences which attached to the oath, so that a false statement made under affirmation should bear with it the same penalty as a false statement described as "perjury." He had, however, seen that several hon. Members had written to their constituents with reference to this measure, saying that they had no objection to it as far as it applied to the Oath of Allegiance, but that they did object to it as far as it applied to witnesses. He would, however, point out to those hon. Members that the law already gave witnesses who were without religious belief the right to affirm, so that they were raising a difficulty which did not occur. It might be said that, "if so, why do you not exempt witnesses from the operation of your Bill?" He would answer that question at once. It was because, unfortunately, the wording of the Evidence Amendment Act of 1869 and the Evidence Further Amendment Act, 1870, was so peculiar that it had given rise to a variety of practices. The words were these—

> "If any person called on to give evidence in any Court of Justice, whether in civil or criminal proceedings, should object to take the oath, or should be objected to as incompetent to take that oath."

Now, the only persons who could be objected to as incompetent to take the oath were those who came now with all their incompetency swept away, except a wife in a criminal proceeding. The only person who could be objected to as incompetent to take the oath was a person without religious belief, or a person who, having religious belief, did not believe in a state of future rewards and punishment. Such persons should, if the presiding Judge were satisfied that the taking of the oath would not be binding on his conscience, make a promise and declaration which now, unfortunately, had given rise to much difficulty. In 1875 a case was brought before the old Court of Queen's Bench, the late Lord Chief Justice presiding. It was a case in which Mr. Woolrych, the police magistrate, had refused to receive the evidence of a man named Lennard, who had said, "I am an Atheist." The

Court of Queen's Bench made the rule absolute for a *mandamus*, requiring Mr. Woolrych to take the evidence, on the ground that he ought to have been satisfied that an oath would have had no binding effect upon Lennard's evidence. Unfortunately, the case was not reported. It was, however, traceable by lawyers; there was a record of it in the Rule Office, but no official report of the case. The consequence had been that, especially in proceedings before the magistrates, and in the Inferior Courts, a curious looseness had been observed in the construction of the words—"The Judge shall be satisfied that an oath has no binding effect upon his conscience." In view of that fact, he had received a letter only that day from a gentleman describing his experience, and putting it so clearly, and in language so much better than the language he could use, that he would take the liberty of reading it. The writer says—

> "A witness in a Court of Law objects to take the oath, and says that he is without belief in a future state of rewards and punishments, but confesses to a belief in the existence of a Supreme Being, and declares that the taking of the oath would have a binding effect on his conscience. In such a case, if I rightly understand the law, as it at present stands, the witness would be utterly incompetent, and his testimony, therefore, wholly inadmissible. For not possessing the required belief as to a future state of rewards and punishments (Reg. *v.* Taylor, Peake 11; Maden *v.* Catanach, 31 L. J. Ex. 118), he would be unqualified to take oath, even if he changed his mind and waived his objection to taking it; and the opportunity of affirming would be denied to him, because, as it seems, to the right to affirm there is attached a condition precedent that the Judge must be satisfied that the taking of the oath would have no binding effect, &c.—a condition which, in the present case, clearly remains unsatisfied."

He was present at a trial in which the present Lord Chief Justice asked the witness if his evidence would be binding on his conscience, and the witness said if he took the oath it would be binding on his conscience, because he would take no pledge and take no oath by which he did not intend to be bound. The Lord Chief Justice, with his usual kindness, took a great deal of trouble to explain the matter to the witness. He did not ask him if the truth would be binding on him, but whether the oath, in the sense of an appeal to some Being who would act in some fashion hostilely or otherwise in consequence of untruthfulness, had any binding effect upon the witness. A short discussion took place, in which an explanation was given on the part of the witness, and an interpretation on the part of the Bench, which occupied some seven or eight minutes before it could be ascertained whether the oath would have a binding effect upon the witness's conscience. In minor proceedings, such as those in the Coroners' Courts and before the magistrate, cases of this kind constantly occurred, and they had arisen because the wording of the Evidence Amendment Acts did leave room for much misconstruction in practice and misinterpretation. It was known to all who watched the progress of the Acts of 1869 and 1870 when they were before the House of Commons, as he had done very closely, the present Mr. Justice Denman, then a Member of the House, having been kind enough to allow him to wait on him in reference to both Bills. Everyone who had watched the progress of those measures would be aware that when they left the House they were without any of the words in them which had caused all the difficulty. Those words were simply supplemented in the House of Lords, probably to meet some objection which had occurred to the mind of some noble Lord at that moment. It had, however, the effect of importing into the matter an element of extreme difficulty. In England, Ireland, and Wales all witnesses, whether they had religious belief or none, should affirm. In Scotland that was not the case, so that this Bill would also relieve witnesses in Scotland as the Acts of 1869 and 1870 did relieve witnesses in England, Ireland, and Wales. To illustrate the necessity for the Bill he would instance a case which came before the Court of Aberdeen last week, and was reported in the Aberdeen journals. The evidence of a man was objected to on the ground that he was an Atheist. The man claimed to affirm, but the Sheriff said—"I have no authority to take this man's affirmation." The Act which gave the right of affirmation in Scotland only gave it those who had religious belief, and to those who took the oath in accordance with their religious belief. He did not know whether the Sheriff was aware that this

Bill was about to be brought forward, but the learned gentleman used these words—

> "Supposing this man were the only witness in a murder case, the murderer must escape, because of a technical objection to the evidence."

He submitted to the House that there had been a disposition on the part of Parliament during the last 60 years—a disposition which had been enlarged by the Evidence Amendment Acts in criminal cases, which was intended to exhaust every possible way of getting at the truth in all cases by getting rid of every incompetency to give evidence. There was an Amendment upon the Paper which asked the House not to consider the Bill, but to refer the grievance to a Royal Commission. He would suggest to the hon. Member for the Oswestry Division of Shropshire (Mr. S. Leighton), in whose name the Amendment stood, that he could hardly have paid any attention to what had already happened in connection with oaths. A Royal Commission was appointed in 1867, and issued no fewer than five Reports altogether, one being signed by five, some by three, some by two, and one by only one Member. The Report from which he now quoted was signed by Lord Lyveden, Mr. E. P. Bouverie, Mr. Lowe (now Lord Sherbrooke), Sir William Stirling Maxwell, and Mr. H. H. Milman. He would trouble the House with only one or two passages from that Report. It said—

> "Oaths of Allegiance have seldom, if ever, been found to be of any practical benefit to the persons or the institutions whose safety and stability it has been sought to maintain by imposing them. In peaceful and prosperous times they are not needed; in times of difficulty and danger they are not observed."

The Commission gave an instance which he might mention to the House. They said—

> "As an example of an oath which appears to us open to nearly every possible objection, we may cite the Oath of Allegiance imposed by the Mutiny Act on recruits for the Army, which the Commission in its Report recommends to be maintained. This oath is a part of the ceremony of attestation which is necessary to complete the enlistment. It may be taken before any Justice of the Peace not being an officer in the Army, and in London it is commonly taken before the magistrate at the Westminster Police Court. There, at certain fixed hours, before and after the other business, recruits are attested and the oath is administered to them in a body by the Usher of the Court, the recruiting sergeant and his batch of recruits being surrounded by any persons who happen to be present, and who are not required to suspend any conversation in which they may be engaged. It would be idle to describe this ceremony as either solemn or impressive, nor does it appear certain that it is even intelligible to the lads who are thus bidden to invoke the Almighty."

He would pass by the historical portion of the Reports of the Commission, because it did not affect what he desired to put to the House. There was, however, an objection which he felt it his duty to consider, and which had been urged by a right hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. G. Hubbard), who was a Member of the House last Session, but was now a Member of the House of Lords. That right hon. Gentleman said the feeling of the House was strongly in favour of the second reading of the Bill. Although he opposed it, with the generosity of a frank opponent he made an appeal to the House to pass that stage. The main objection the right hon. Gentleman took was that the Bill was so sweeping that it included the Coronation Oath and the Episcopal Enthronement Oath. He (Mr. Bradlaugh) frankly said that he had considered it impertinent to make any exception; but, if the Bill went into Committee, he would not object to such exceptions being made, if the House thought it right to make them. Last Session gave him great encouragement. There were two Divisions taken nominally on the question of adjournment, but really on his declaration that the Members voting would be considered to be voting for or against the Bill. In the first Division there was a majority of 91 in its favour, and in the second a majority of 104. He hoped he had not been tiresome to the House in what he had put forward as reasons for the Bill. He had no desire to avoid any part of the question. He had been almost silent in reference to the past, because he thought the House would consider it better on his part, now it was no longer a question in regard to which Party bitterness arose, but one in connection with which Members on both sides of the House were trying to find a solution of a serious difficulty, that he should no longer refer to mere matters of personal relief to himself. He should certainly be glad if the House would permit him to do that by law which he would have done by inclination eight years ago. He was, however, pleading for a large number of cases in which serious evils might arise. He was pleading in favour of the recognition of a principle which the late Mr. Justice Mellor had clearly and distinctly put in his marvellously able pamphlet. Speaking of the legislation of 1869 and 1870 on this question, the learned Judge said—

> "The Legislature has enabled even Atheists to depose without any obligation of taking an oath, but at the same time making them liable to punishment for false testimony, as if they had committed perjury. Profoundly convinced by a long judicial experience of the general worthlessness of oaths, especially in cases in which their falsity cannot be tested by cross-examination, or be criminally punished, I have become an advocate for the abolition of oaths as the test ot truth; but I would retain the punishment for false delarations wherever at present the law prescribes a penalty for a false oath."

He knew that his argument, if it was worth anything, went to the question of abolishing oaths altogether; but he was not prepared to ask the House to do that, because he knew there were many men—very conscientious men—who thought they ought to be permitted to swear their allegiance, and who desired to make the appeal they now made before good evidence. He did not propose to interfere with their tender consciences in any way. He only asked an option for all who were either disabled by law at present, or who desired to be relieved from a position which often became intolerable. He thanked the House for its attention, and begged to move the second reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry), in rising to move the following Amendment:—

> "That, having regard to the fact that the Bill for the Amendment of the Law as to Oaths relates not only to the Parliamentary Oath, but involves grave questions of Constitutional usage affecting every class of persons within these Realms, this House declines to make any alteration in the present Law until the whole subject has been investigated by a Royal Commission,"

said, he thought it a matter for satisfaction that the House could approach the consideration of the question free from those local and personal prejudices which, on other occasions, had animated their debates. It was also a matter of congratulation that they could deal with it free even from Party traditions; and he could assure the House that in no quarter would the question be debated in a fairer, more tolerant, or more liberal spirit than in the quarter of the House from which he rose. He should discuss it from a somewhat wider standpoint than the hon. Member—for it was a question not of forms, but of morals and religion. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) had shown how much of pure technicality was involved in the issue. But he had not pointed out its comprehensive and far-reaching character. It appeared to him (Mr. Leighton) that such a question ought, above all others, to be in the hands, not of a private Member, but of the Government. He doubted whether a question of this sort could be brought to fruition in the hands of a private Member. They all knew the dangers which accompanied amateur legislation. They all desired to remove grievances; but they also desired to respect scruples of conscience. The present system was not a vestige of ancient legislation; it was constructed upon modern lines of thought, and was the work of recent Acts of Parliament. The Coronation Oath was not more than 200 years old, the Oath of Allegiance had been changed three times during the last 200 years, and had not been improved. Its original words were—

> "I will be true and faithful to the King and his heirs, and truth and faith will bear to him of life and limb and terrene honour, and will not know or hear of any ill or damage intended him without defending him therefrom."

These noble words, converted by 1 *Geo.* I. into—

> "I do sincerely promise and swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty."

And again, in 1868, into the unmeaning formula—

> "I do swear I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, heirs, and successors according to the law."

The whole history of legislation in reference to oaths and affirmations had been one of continuous change. But every compromise and every re-adjustment had been founded either on religious motives or to secure the ends of justice. It was only on the grounds of religion that jurors had been released from the oath. The principle had always been to preserve the sanctity of the oath wherever it was possible. Wherever the oath had no binding effect on the conscience, then, in the case of a witness, the Judge might dispense with the oath, but not so in the case of a juror. The oath could only be dispensed with in the case of the juror on his declaration that he held a "religious" objection to the oath. In Courts of Justice the discretion whether a witness or juror was to swear or affirm was in the hands of the Judge, and never of the witness or juror himself. The Judge might accept evidence of a witness if he were satisfied that the taking of an oath would have no binding effect on his conscience. In that case only the witness had a right to affirm. The option and discretion was in the Judge. But the Bill reversed all this, and placed the option in the juror or witness. A Royal Commission sat on this question 20 years ago. The Reference to that Commission was of a very limited character. To that Commission was not referred the whole question of Oaths and Affirmations; clerical, judicial, and Parliamentary Oaths were withdrawn from their consideration. What did that Commission report? They reported that the oaths, in the cases of jurymen, officials, soldiers, and sailors, should be retained. The Report of the Commission was one great landmark in relation to this subject in modern times; and another landmark was the rejection, only three years ago, of a certain Bill called the "Parliamentary Oaths Bill," brought in by a Radical Government in a Radical Parliament. Some 3,000 Petitions were presented against that Bill, and only 700 in its favour. How many Petitions had been presented in favour of the present far more sweeping Bill? He did not think there had been a single one. He was, therefore, justified in saying that the whole tendency of modern thought, as far they had any Parliamentary record, was opposed to the proposition of the hon. Member. The record of the Royal Commission was against one part of the Bill—the rejection of the Bill three years ago against the other part. He hoped the House would appreciate the comprehensive nature of this measure—the Bill virtually abolished all oaths. Christians did not consider that oaths ought to be taken unless it was obligatory by law that it should be taken. Unnecessary oaths were unlawful, and he wished to have that position very clearly understood. By the 39th Article of the Church it was laid down that the "Christian religion doth not prohibit but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth;" but if the Bill passed no magistrate would be any longer able to require a man to take an oath. No oath would be obligatory; every oath would be merely voluntary. What would be the practical effect of the measure in Courts of Justice? Did the sanction of an oath give any guarantee that a witness would speak the truth? He was quite aware that many men would speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, in all places and at all times, without taking any oath at all; but he regretted to say that that was not universal. When he looked upon the grave and reverend seigniors who sat upon the two Front Benches of that House and listened to the way in which they described the speeches of their opponents as full of suppressions of the truth, and of the suggestions false, he was inclined to say that truth was not to be found among political gentlemen. He saw some time ago in a newspaper that a Member of Parliament had been charged with committing wilful and corrupt perjury in a Court of Justice, and the only reason why he was not punished for that offence was that the point upon which the false assertion was made was not pertinent to the issue. He thought it was said that the hon. Gentleman in question had availed himself of the privilege of affirming, as one upon whose conscience an oath had no binding effect.

MR. BRADLAUGH: The hon. Gentleman will excuse me if I remark that there has only been one such case, and that is mine, and it is only justice to say that I gave the noble Lord who made the charge of perjury against me an opportunity of substantiating the charge in a Court of Justice, but he avoided it.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON said, the hon. Member had put on the cap himself, for he (Mr. S. Leighton) did not desire to import personalities—it mattered not to his argument if a "lying spirit" was abroad, with whom it had taken up his abode. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] All he desired to point out was that the spirit of truth was not always to be found amongst political gentlemen in political controversies, nor yet among commercial gentlemen. The Common Law had been obliged to introduce a maxim of *caveat emptor* in the matter of bargains and sales, and certainly everyone who had bought a horse would understand the meaning of that maxim. Mr. Justice Stephen the other day was reported to have made a statement from the Bench which illustrated the question whether ordinary men, unfettered by the obligation of an oath, were to be relied on to speak the truth. Mr. Justice Stephen was reported to have used these words—

> "The standard of public morality is so low with respect to Income Tax returns that an admission of having made false returns should not invalidate a man's claim to be believed on oath in relation to private affairs."

So, according to the learned Judge, anyone who solemnly affirmed all sorts of lies in his Income Tax returns, when he went into the witness-box and had his sense of conscience solemnly appealed to might be trusted on his oath. Those who frequented Courts of Justice knew the subterfuges to which witnesses who did not intend to speak the truth would resort in the endeavour to save themselves from the subsequent pricking of their conscience. Some of them believed that the oath had no valid effect unless the sign of the cross was on the Book, or unless they had three hands on the Book, or if they kissed their thumbs, or if they had their gloves on. The Bill before the House was full of absurdities. It left two courses open to a witness; he might either take the oath, or he might affirm, and under it he might one day take the oath and the next day affirm, just as he chose. The result would be that an immoral pagan, who cared nothing for the sanctity of an oath, would always swear, so that greater credit might be given to his evidence; while the superstitious Christian who wanted to lie would always affirm, in order that he might give false evidence without, as he might think, committing the crime of perjury. A great deal of perjury there undoubtedly was in Courts of Justice, even under the sanction of an oath; but far more would be committed if that sanction were taken away. But, after all, an oath was a religious test, and was always intended to be so, and the jury had to go through this religious test before they were allowed to return a verdict in this Christian country. They had to declare their religion, either by taking the oath, or by declaring a "religious" objection to it. Perhaps the time had come for the abolition of all tests. But this Bill did not propose to abolish all tests; it only abolished religious tests. It still kept in force secular tests. The Bill did not go far enough even from the standpoint of the hon. Member. If the time had arrived for the abolition of all tests, let Parliament consider the question; but do not let them abolish religious tests, and leave secular tests. The hon. Member had called attention to the Commission of 1867; but, nevertheless, the hon. Member appeared to be ignorant as to what it was that Commission reported. He (Mr. S. Leighton) had already referred to the Report of the majority; but the minority on that Commission, consisting of five distinguished men, which was worth recalling at the present moment, after considering that matter as a whole, and from a much wider standpoint than the hon. Member for Northampton, made this Report—

> "Oaths of Allegiance are seldom, if ever, of practical value. Political oaths are of doubtful utility; declarations, as might have been expected, are as nugatory as oaths. No declaration or promissory obligation ought to be imposed without penalties being attached for its non-observance, and which the Executive is willing to enforce."

That was the Minority Report of the Commission of 1867. With regard to the Parliamentary Oath, what penalties were provided? He had never heard of an Executive imposing penalties for the violation of the oath. Then let them, if they desired to abolish tests, abolish them altogether, and abolish the scandalous spectacle of men of honour coming to that Table and solemnly affirming their allegiance to institutions which they deemed it their duty, the moment they entered the House, to do their utmost to upset. There were a number of inconsistencies and absurdities in the Bill. Even the hon. Member himself declared the Bill required amendment, and was willing to except from its provisions the Coronation Oath or Clerical Oath. He confessed that the Bill, as it stood, could not be carried forward in its entirety. Under these circumstances, he thought a Royal Commission was the best tribnual to which to refer such a technical and comprehensive question. The whole question of promissory oaths should be referred to such a Commission, as well as oaths in the witness box, and oaths in the jury box, and of Oaths and Affirmations at the Table of the House. Without disparaging the judgment of the House, he thought the deliberate opinion of 12 or 15 selected men would carry more weight with the country than the judgment of 600 Gentlemen whom the chances of a popular election had brought there to-day, and who might be dismissed to-morrow. They ought to ask such a Commission to inform the House how far in the witness-box the oath was a guarantee of truth; how far it would be satisfactory to the country that jurors should be allowed to sit and decide on the liberties, the lives, and the property of the people of this country without a test of their religious principles. The proposal contained in his Amendment was in accordance with historical precedent. It was the most dignified course to pursue, and he believed it would be fruitful of results. At all events, it was a compromise, and in English politics they had always been fond of compromises. But, whatever the result of the debate that day might be, let the House honestly realize the magnitude of the resolution on the threshold of which they were standing. The House was not re-casting, as it had done over and over again, the form of the Oath on religious grounds. They were entering on a new departure. Up to this time they had recognized and established in the matter of Oaths the scruples of every religious denomination; but they were now asked to recognize and establish the scruples of Atheists. They owed a duty in this country to Christians as well as to Atheists, and if they suddenly passed this Bill, as it stood, they would fail in their duty to them, and offend the consciences of many people. He begged to move the Amendment which stood in his name.

Mr. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid) said, he took no exception to the manner in which the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) had moved the second reading of the Bill. The hon Gentleman certainly deserved the praise of all men for the courage and honesty with which he had fought his battle; and if at the present day the cause of Christianity and, as he (Mr. de Lisle) believed, of truth, in its highest aspect, was failing in the country, it was because those who were Christians were rotten and broken down in their beliefs; whereas those who were the champions of unbelief had the courage and manliness to state what they apprehended. Nevertheless, openly professed unbelievers, the Christian religion taught, stood in the way of everlasting perdition, although there was always hope for them according to the dictum of St. Augustine — "Every impious man lives either to be converted or to exercise the good." He was aware that the opinions he held were more or less despised at the present day by those who had adopted the revolutionary ideas of modern thought, and that therefore, in discussing questions of this kind, it was neither right nor prudent to dwell too much upon theological arguments. But even amongst religious men there was the very greatest difference of opinion as to whether it was wise to maintain the ancient forms of oaths. When the great Affirmation Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) was before the country, the religious world was almost unanimous in opposing the measure—witness some 3,000 Petitions against the Bill, and a joint protest of the whole Roman Catholic Hierarchy. There was, however, one great and noble voice which proclaimed an utterly opposite opinion. Cardinal Newman said—

> "I cannot consider the Affirmation Bill involves a religious principle, for, as I have had occasion to observe in print more than 30 years ago, what the political and social world means by the word God is too often not the Christian God, the Jewish God, or the Mahomedan God, nor a personal God, but an unknown God. . . . Hence it little concerns religion whether Mr. Bradlaugh swears by no God, or by an impersonal material, or an abstract or ideal something or other."

In the opinion of Cardinal Newman, nothing would have been lost to the cause of religion by the adoption of the Affirmation Bill. That opinion deserved great respect, and there were, no doubt, many men on both sides of the House who would vote for the present Bill in the sense of the words of Cardinal Newman. He (Mr. de Lisle) differed from the argument expressed by his Eminence, because he could not conceive it possible for any man to repeat to himself the words "So help me God" without attaching to that symbol a real meaning — namely, that God was a living God; that He had knowledge of what passed on this earth; and that He would reward or punish according to the rectitude of purpose with which He was appealed to. Looking at the Bill on its merits, he objected to it for several reasons, but chiefly because it contained two or three false assertions. He had no doubt that they were not intended by the hon. Member; but, taking the words in their ordinary sense, he maintained that the measure contained several false statements which should be eradicated from it. In the first instance, he noticed the absence of a Preamble to the Bill. Why was this? All previous measures of the kind had been introduced to the notice of Parliament with a Preamble; why, therefore, should the promoters of this Bill, which was introduced in order to relieve the consciences of various classes of Her Majesty's subjects, object to put in a Preamble in order to express their reason for the measure? He suggested that the hon. Member should modify the Bill in this sense—

> "Whereas it is expedient and reasonable that the simple affirmation of persons of the persuasion of the people called Atheists and of Agnostics should be allowed in all cases where an oath is or shall be required by law, Be it enacted, &c."

He (Mr. de Lisle) could conceive no objection to that Preamble, and it would be an encouragement to him to vote for the Bill if a Preamble of this kind were introduced. If the measure was intended to relieve the consciences of persons called Atheists and Agnostics, so be it; but let the fact be stated in the Bill. He would read the measure, not as it stood, but as he thought it ought to read—

> "I. Every person upon objecting to being sworn shall be permitted to make simple affirmation, instead of taking an oath, in all places and for all purposes where an oath is or shall be required by law, which affirmation shall be of the same legal force and effect as if he had taken the oath; and if any person making such affirmation shall wilfully, falsely, and corruptly affirm any matter or thing which, if deposed on oath, would have amounted to wilful and corrupt perjury, he shall be liable to prosecution, indictment, sentence and punishment in all legal respects as if he had formerly committed wilful and corrupt perjury."

And in like manner, in Clause 2, he would substitute the word "simply" for the word "solemnly." The reason he wished to strike out "solemn" and add "legal," and put in "formerly," was to save a statement which seemed to him a misleading and false one, for it seemed to him very doubtful whether a "solemn affirmation" was not the same as an oath.

Mr. BRADLAUGH said, that the words "solemn affirmation" were words that had already been enacted in Parliament—in the Acts of 1869 and 1870—in reference to persons without religious belief.

Mr. DE LISLE said, that the fact that in two previous Acts bad laws had been enacted was no reason why he should agree to their re-enactment in further legislation. The Bill contained several statements of alleged facts which were not real facts, and which no power on earth could make facts. It declared that when any person made a "solemn" affirmation instead of taking an oath, his affirmation had the same force and effect as if he had taken the oath—and he was doubtful whether, on the hypothesis of "solemnity," it was not an act of self-deification, because when the appeal to the Deity was ignored a man was simply put in the position that he could swear by no one greater than himself. He maintained that though they might declare that an affirmation should have the same legal force and effect as an oath, they could not give to it the actual sanctity of an oath, the essence of which lay in the asseveration made to the Divine Being, and that was his reason for desiring the insertion of the word "legal." The whole essence of oaths was that those who took them believed that if they committed perjury they would incur not only legal and temporal penalties, but also punishment in the land beyond the grave. He objected, therefore, to the statement that making an affirmation would have the same force and effect as taking an oath, because it was not true. As to the use of the word "solemn" as applied to an affirmation, he had consulted a great many dictionaries, and he found that in all languages the word was taken to imply an idea of religiousness of some sort or other. The real test of the solemnity of an act had reference to the relation between the human doer of the act and the Highest Power. Heathen and classic writers had clearly expressed the idea, and the jurisprudence of the whole world was in favour of the sanctity of oaths. Cicero, the most eloquent of Roman jurists, said—

> "Who shall deny that these opinions are useful when he understands how many things are made firm by the swearing of an oath? What safety is attached to Treaties by religion! How many the fear of punishment from God has recalled from crime! How holy is the intercourse of citizens amongst themselves when the immortal gods are introduced, sometimes as judges, sometimes as witnesses."

When the question as to Affirmations was under discussion in the House some time ago, he wrote a pamphlet on the Parliamentary Oath, and from the line which he then took, after careful examination of the matter, he had never departed. He had held that the divorce of religion from morality would have the effect of sapping the foundations of society, and that to sap the foundations of society was to prepare the downfall of England. England's great power rested on the manliness of character of the English people, and on the soundness and goodness of her laws; and as the laws were the result of the religious belief and the character of the people, so he held that if they tampered with the laws which had worked so well in the past, and lowered them to meet the lower aspirations of the present day, they would strike a fatal blow, not only at the character of the British people, but at the stability and endurance of the British Empire. He might be allowed to quote the noble words used by the present Emperor of Germany, not many days old, under the most solemn and impressive circumstances—namely—

> "Only a generation growing up upon the sound basis of the fear of God and simplicity of morals can possess sufficient resisting power to overcome the dangers which, in a time of rapid economical movement, arise for the entire community, through the examples of the highly luxurious life of individuals."

For himself, he believed that it was in the fear of God that the great German Empire was established, and that it was because of the want of the fear of God that the French Empire was destroyed. And it was because he did not wish the British Empire to follow the fate of that of France that he took up his present attitude. In a work of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian on the Homeric writings, the right hon. Gentleman objected to divorcing the religious sentiment from the moral law, remarking—

> "I ask permission to protest against the idea that any Socrates whatever was the patentee of that sentiment of right and wrong which is the most precious part of the patrimony of mankind. . . . . It is when religion and morality are torn asunder that the existence of moral ideas is endangered."

Those were formerly the right hon. Gentleman's views, and he had no doubt they were still his views. He would like to urge upon the House that it was impossible to make a thing solemn by calling it solemn. The natural position for any man to take up when he wished to be believed was to make the highest kind of assertion which he considered that he could make; he swore by his honour if he thought there was nothing higher than his honour; if he was a Loyalist he might swear by the King's honour, as a thing higher than his own; if he was a Republican he might swear by the Cap of Liberty; there were hundreds of thousands of ways of swearing. But now they proposed to put human beings in the position of saying that there was nothing greater or more sacred than themselves. And therefore he had serious doubt as to whether they were not asserting a sort of self-deification. This might not meet the views commonly held in the present day, but it was in accordance with the opinions of theologians, Protestant as well as Catholic, of past days and also of the present day. He (Mr. de Lisle) reminded the House that St. Paul, in his Sixth Epistle to the Hebrews, wrote—

> "For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of strife."

In the next verse they found St. Paul representing the inscrutable ways of Providence thus—

> "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath. . . . . For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He sware by Himself."

His (Mr. de Lisle's) contention was that if they were going to make the affirmation "solemn" they were going to put a man, in the words of St. Paul, in the position of being able to swear by no greater than himself—to make a man, in fact, assume the position of Deity. The essence of morality, as he understood it, did not consist in conferring upon a man attributes which he could not possibly possess.

Mr. W. A. MACDONALD (Queen's County, Ossory) rose to Order, and asked whether the hon. Gentleman was really speaking to the Question before the House?

Mr. SPEAKER: I see no reason to interfere with the hon. Member.

Mr. DE LISLE said, he thanked Mr. Speaker for the sanction he had given to the line of argument he was pursuing. From his point of view, the total abolition of the oath would be much less objectionable than to leave the word "solemn," as, if the word "solemn" were struck out, a man might make a simple affirmation. If they did not abolish the oath altogether, but left it optional, they put the temptation in the way of the bad Christian to affirm when he ought to swear, and, therefore, to tell a lie and commit real perjury, while they gave occasion to bad, reckless, irreverent Atheists to mock and scoff at religion if they chose to take the oath. If they were to abolish the oath, let them do it absolutely, on the ground, as Cardinal Newman put it, that the word "God" had ceased to have any meaning with the English people. So far as he had been able to form an opinion, he should say of the average man who went into the Law Courts that it would be more advantageous to him to tell a falsehood than to tell the truth. In cases of fraud or assault, or seduction, or adultery, he could not conceive what advantage a man had to gain by telling the truth, and, therefore, looking at self-preservation as the highest law according to certain modern philosophy, the man would tell a falsehood. He was not ashamed to say that he did not maintain that he was bound on all occasions to tell "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." He was quite certain that it would not be denied that the law of honour considered that in certain cases a man was compelled to tell a lie for the sake of somebody else's honour, when that honour was of more particular advantage to the public than his own. On the grounds urged for this Bill, he saw no reason why the Declaration of Allegiance to Her Majesty should not be abolished, as there were those in the House who were as opposed to the Royal Sovereignty as there were to religion. In Committee he should certainly put in a plea for criminals that they might claim to be judged by jurors who professed a belief in God. In conclusion, he would only remark that he believed that the religious convictions and feelings of the majority of the Queen's subjects in this country were against a Bill of this kind. So far as he had been able to understand their feelings, he believed that a measure such as this was distasteful to them; but whether it were distasteful or agreeable, he, for one, would never condescend to represent any constituency which asked him to do anything towards the abolition of the Oath.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "having regard to the fact that the Bill for the Amendment of the Law as to Oaths relates not only to the Parliamentary Oath, but involves grave questions of Constitutional usage affecting every class of persons within these Realms, this House declines to make any alteration in the present Law until the whole subject has been investigated by a Royal Commission,"—(*Mr. Stanley Leighton,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Sir JOHN SIMON (Dewsbury) said, he rejoiced that that important question had passed out of the region of Party politics, and that it was being discussed in a tone that befitted the occasion and the dignity of the House. There was an extraordinary discrepancy between the speeches of the Proposer and the Seconder of the Amendment. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Stanley Leighton) who proposed the Amendment occupied the whole of his speech with protests, repeated again and again, against the abolition of oaths, while the hon. Gentleman who spoke last would sweep away oaths entirely and substitute affirmations in every case, rather than leave the law as the Gentleman who proposed the Amendment desired it should be. The hon. Member who seconded the Amendment (Mr. De Lisle) was anxious for a Preamble to the Bill. Well, the hon. Member could not do better than, when the Bill was in Committee, propose the extract which he had read from the letter of Cardinal Newman. There could not be a better Preamble than that extract, expressed at once forcibly and elegantly, by that eminent man, and he (Sir John Simon) ventured to say that the hon. Gentleman's misgivings about the abolition of oaths might have found some relief from Cardinal Newman's letter. The hon. Member opposite protested that the abolition of the oath or the giving of an option would be an offence to religious feeling and to the consciences of men. Well, it was because of the deep reverence in which he (Sir John Simon) and the religious body to which he belonged held the name of the Supreme Being that he protested against the continuance of this system of oath-taking, which was simply a profanation, and was no prevention of untruth or perjury. The hon. Member protested against a subject of this kind being dealt with by a private Member, and spoke almost contemptuously of what he called private Members' legislation. He (Sir John Simon) did not know how long the hon. Member had been in the House; but he himself had been there long enough to have seen Bills of great usefulness brought forward and carried successfully by private Members. He had also seen Bills proposed by private Members the soundness of which was such that Governments became convinced of their necessity, and took them up and passed them into law. It might be that, if this Bill was thrown out, the Government would ultimately take up the subject, and deal with it on their own authority; but until that was done, he thought that those who felt deep reverence for God's name, and who held the opinions which he (Sir John Simon) held in regard to oaths, should be considered, as well as the section to which the hon. Member opposite referred. It was not from any indifference to the religious test that he now acted, and not from any indifference to the penetrating appeal which, in some instances, he admitted the oath did make to the consciences of men, but it was because of that reverence in which he held the Supreme Being that he thought they ought not to subject His name to desecration by bringing it forward in all their wordly affairs, in promises and matters of contract between man and man—invoking the sacred name of the Deity, and the next moment forgetting that they had done so. Take the case of Courts of Justice. He had had as large experience as any other barrister of his standing of the effect of an oath. A witness came into the box; the book was presented to him; a little private conversation went on between him and the crier of the Court, who uttered a few words in a very inaudible way, and the witness kissed the Book. The very manner of administering the oath was such an empty form that there was nothing in it calculated to awaken conscience, or touch the religious feelings of the witness. Then the witness was examined by counsel, and what came next? The counsel on the other side got up and cross-examined him, and treated him just as though there had been no oath at all—treated him like a man who had not come there to tell the truth. He did not think such a system was calculated to preserve reverence for an oath, or to enforce truth. Then let them take the case of the House of Commons. At the commencement of a Parliament they knew the state of confusion in which the Oath was administered. Tables were placed on the floor of the House; Members came in in large batches, crushing against one another, the Oath was repeated, and they all kissed the Book. Could there be anything more irreverent than that system? He would quote what Lord Shaftesbury said upon it. In his diary he wrote—

> "12th November, 1852: To the House of Lords to take the Oath. What a mode of administering a sacred office! Can there be any value in such an affirmation?"

The hon. Member opposite said the Bill purported to remove oaths altogether. The Bill did nothing of the kind; it was optional. Then, again, the hon. Member said that every change in the Oath had been founded on religious motives. He was at issue with him there. If the hon. Member meant that every relief had reference to religious and conscientious feelings, he said it was not true. The Statutes of 1869 and 1870 were based upon the absence of religion. Parliament gave relief not to the religious man who had a conscientious objection on account of religion, but it gave relief to the Atheist—to the man who did not acknowledge the name of God as binding upon his conscience. Then the hon. Gentleman spoke of the subterfuges to which recourse was had by witnesses; but that was one of the strongest arguments against the continuance of the Oath that they could conceive of. The hon. Member mentioned the subterfuge of kissing the thumb instead of the Book, and he (Sir John Simon) had himself been told of witnesses who did not consider themselves bound even by kissing the Book unless there was a cross upon it. Therefore, was it not idle and absurd, and he might say profane, to continue a system which was open to these subterfuges, and which, so far as these subterfuges were practised, did not bind the conscience of the swearer? The hon. Gentleman who spoke last objected to the Bill in its present form. He (Sir John Simon) might tell the House that such an Act in the same words was already the law in New Zealand. The objections which the hon. Member took to the Bill could be dealt with in Committee. The hon. Member who moved the Amendment referred to the relief which had been given to Quakers and Moravians. That relief was first given under a Statute of William III. There were other Statutes extending the same relief to Separatists, and in the 1st & 2nd of the present reign there was enacted a Statute which enabled a person who had been once a Quaker to affirm instead of taking the oath. So that if the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) had, at any time in his life been a Quaker, he might have come to the Table and affirm under that Statute. Surely that was not a reasonable state of the law. Would hon. Gentlemen who were contending for the sanctity of an oath support a law which enabled a man who had thrown off the character of a Quaker or a Moravian, and who was an Atheist, to take advantage of an Act which was never intended for an Atheist? The sooner they got rid of such a state of the law the better. Nothing could be more painful than the spectacle they had seen in that House from time to time when questions had been raised as to what a man's belief was at a particular time, and when his rights as a citizen were determined by a House carried away by Party feelings, religious antipathies, and strong prejudices. It was time they got rid of such a state of things, and he should think that, so far from opposing this measure, it would have rejoiced the heart of every Member of the House to put an end to those unseemly controversies about a man's conscientious belief—to the practice of the House sitting as a Court to form judgment upon what concerned a man's relation to his Maker.

Mr. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport), who had a Notice upon the Paper for the rejection of the Bill, said: I desire to explain to the House the reasons why I must oppose this Bill. It affects three kinds of oaths; and it is necessary to consider why those oaths were originally imposed, and the effect of doing away with them. With regard to the Oath of Allegiance, I agree in principle with the Report which was read by the hon. Member for Northampton, and am willing to support any Bill which abolishes that Oath, and, at the same time, does away with any Affirmation of Allegiance. I see no good in requiring a very small number of Her Majesty's subjects thus to testify to their loyalty. Private soldiers in the Army have to take the Oath of Allegiance; officers need not do so. The Oath is taken, perhaps, by hardly 1 per cent of Her Majesty's subjects, and it would be ridiculous to say that the 99 per cent who do not take it are not as loyal as the small minority who do; and experience has shown that if men are determined to rebel or commit high treason, the fact that years before they took the Oath of Allegiance does not prevent them. Somehow or other, they persuade themselves that their conduct is not inconsistent with it. But, as the law stands, a man who has to take the Oath is bound to show his allegiance to his Monarch and his reverence to the Almighty, either by taking the Oath, or by declining to take it, because of the religious scruple that he considers it derogatory to the Almighty to invoke Him. If, then, you abolish the Oath, but retain the Affirmation of Allegiance, you declare that you consider it necessary for a man to respect the King, but not to respect the King of Kings; and I consider it better for the State that its men in authority should consist of God-fearing Republicans than of Atheistical Monarchists. If a man be both an Atheist and a Republican, neither Oath nor Affirmation will keep him out. Next, as to the oath in Courts of Justice. This is a thing of universal practice. In all ages of the world's history, and in every civilized or semi-civilized country on the globe, oaths have been required in Courts of Justice. They arise from the necessity of securing the most accurate truth from witnesses, and are based upon the universal conviction in men's minds that an oath is the best means of obtaining this result. The State is the dispenser of justice, and has a right to see that the facts are truly stated. It is said that it is immoral to recognize two kinds of truth, and this might be so if the State had to do with metaphysical philosophy; but it has to do with facts and opinions as it finds them, and there is no doubt that in most men's minds there are two kinds of truth, and when the name of the Almighty is invoked a deeper sense of seriousness and responsibility is felt. A man who has no wish to be untruthful will yet state things to which he would not swear. My long experience as a solicitor leads me to believe that if the sanction of the oath were done away with in Courts of Justice many more untrue statements, and certainly a great many more inaccurate statements, would be made by witnesses than are made under the existing system. Everyone acquainted with the Law Courts knows that counsel very frequently find it efficacious to remind witnesses that they are upon oath. The gravity of the oath, in the opinion of the humbler and less educated classes, is placed beyond all doubt by the subterfuges to which people often have recourse in order to avoid being fully sworn. It is by no means unusual for a witness to kiss his thumb instead of the Book. And with regard to the middle classes, I will describe to the House a scene of which I was an eye-witness. In an important case in the Court of Chancery three or four Presbyterians from Scotland—very respectable tradesmen—were being examined. Each of them had previously sworn to written affidavits, upon which they were cross-examined. The statements made in Court were greatly at variance with those contained in the written affidavits. On being asked to explain, each in turn, after swearing that he was a God-fearing man, who went to kirk regularly, stated that he had told the truth in Court, because there he had been sworn in the regular Presbyterian fashion holding up his right hand; but that the oath which he had taken when making his affidavit was only taken in the English manner by kissing the Book, and it was, therefore, not binding upon his conscience. And with regard to the higher classes, I have long noticed the wonderful difference that there is between the statement made in the first instance to a solicitor of the facts of a case upon which he is to advise, and that which is afterwards made when the proofs are taken for counsel, with a view to the trial, and with the evidence actually given at the trial. Far greater pains are taken at the last to be carefully accurate, and the witness who has pledged his word to the first statement demurs and tones it down when he finds that he has to swear to it. I can only remember one instance of a witness declining to be sworn without being able to state that he had a conscientious objection to an oath. It was an arbitration, and things were at a deadlock, when the arbitrator inquired if he was a Quaker, and he replied that his parents were Quakers, and he had never been baptised, upon which he was allowed to affirm as a Quaker. The reason of his declining to be sworn was soon painfully evident, for his evidence consisted of a tissue of lies, and when he was severely cross-examined by the opposing counsel, he showed his conscientious objection to an oath by swearing at the counsel. This is the only specimen I have seen of the people whom this Bill will benefit. It is true that the universal appreciation of such an oath in Courts of Justice has of late years been relaxed; but the relaxation has been made not in the interest of witnesses, but in the interest of the State, in order that testimony might be obtained which would have been lost if the witnesses had not been allowed to affirm; and in making the relaxation the Legislature took care that in the case either of a Moravian or a Quaker who objected to be sworn, the Court should know the reason of the objection, and that in the case of a person who avowed himself an Atheist, or without a belief in a future state, the ground of his objection should be known, so that the Judge and jury, knowing the state of his mind, might form an estimate of the value of his evidence, and take it for what it was worth. But under this Bill a witness will be entitled to refuse to take the oath without assigning any reason whatever. The jury will thus have nothing to guide them in estimating the value of his statements; and it seems to me most probable that the effect of giving witnesses the option of declining to be sworn without assigning any reason will be to abolish the oath altogether, and unsworn witnesses will allow themselves as much licence in statements in the witness-box as hon. Members do in and out of this House. It is all very well to say that witnesses will still be liable to prosecution for giving false evidence; but the chances of prosecution are so small that hardly one witness in 1,000 would be deterred from telling an untruth by the fear of it. You must first find your prosecutor, then you must show that the false statement was upon a point material to the issue, then you must prove its falsity up to the hilt, or a jury will give the accused the benefit of the doubt and acquit him. The poorer classes are not afraid of prosecution for giving false testimony, but they are afraid of being damned, and it seems to me desirable, in the interest of truth and justice, that the State should avail itself of this fear as the best known means of securing trustworthy evidence. Lastly, I come to the oaths taken by jurors, and would point out to the House that this Bill is revolutionary in its character, for it proposes to abolish trial by jury. Men in the jury-box will no longer be jurors if they are not sworn. If this measure passes, every juryman will refuse to be sworn through a natural unwillingness to take upon his conscience higher obligations than are absolutely necessary, and the confidence which is now felt by parties to an action and by criminals, in the fact that their case will be tried by 12 men who have sworn to do justice will be fatally shaken. In a paper which I hold in my hand, which bears the names of the hon. Member for Northampton and several other Members, several reasons are given in support of the Bill, and amongst others it is stated that in "*Ex parte* Lennard"—a case heard in April, 1875, but, unfortunately, not reported—the Judges of the Court of Queen's Bench unanimously declared that after the proposed witness had said, "I am an Atheist," the magistrate ought to have been satisfied that Lennard was a person upon whom conscience would have no binding effect. It appears, then, that an Atheist is a man upon whom conscience has no binding effect. [Mr. Bradlaugh was understood to dispute the inference drawn by the hon. Member.] I say, Sir, that I am reading the paper before me—that it contains this statement of the decision of the Court, and it certainly is not repudiated in the paper by the Gentlemen whose names are upon it. If this be so—and it is not for me to dispute it—I submit that it forms an additional reason why we ought not to entrust the property, the liberty, or the life of any man to a jury among whom there may be persons upon whom conscience has no binding effect. The proposal to relax the oath in the case of jurors is not made for the sake of getting better verdicts, but for the sake of Atheists and others who are supposed to desire to go into the jury-box without taking the oath. At present such persons are altogether relieved, and I hope they always may be. It does not then appear to me that any case of hardship has been made out by the promoters of the Bill in support of the measure. No one desires that Atheists should be compelled to take the oath as jurors; let them go their own way and escape liability to serve. It has been judicially decided that a man who says there is no God is one on whom conscience has no binding effect; a far higher authority has declared his stupendous folly; and I must express my earnest hope that the House will take no step tending to make Courts of Justice different from what they have been—namely, Courts in which the authority of God is duly recognized, and the sanctions in favour of telling the truth and giving a verdict according to conscience are such as every man who fears a Supreme Being entirely recognizes. For these reasons I shall oppose the Bill.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle) said, the hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Sydney Gedge) seemed to have argued the case before the House as if there were no such thing as an affirmation already known. He (Sir Joseph Pease) could tell the hon. Member that by the 17th and 18th Victoria in civil cases, and by the 24th and 25th Victoria in criminal cases, a witness had a right to ask the Court to hear him upon his affirmation if his conscientious scruples prevented him from taking an oath. It was for the Court, of course, to be satisfied that the witness, not being a Moravian or Quaker or Separatist who had a right to affirm without question, had a *bonâ fide* conscientious scruple. So far as he (Sir Joseph Pease) had read the Statutes, it appeared to him that the Court had no right to ask a witness any further question after he had declared a conscientious objection to taking the oath unless there were reasons for doubting his *bona fides.* The hon. Member for Mid Leicestershire (Mr. De Lisle) made about an hour ago a very long speech on this subject, and said that no one could make solemn that which was not solemn—solemn by Act of Parliament. They had often heard of "a solemn farce," and, without applying that to the hon. Member's speech in the slightest degree, he must say that the hon. Member had seemed to go through an argument which was really hundreds of years old upon this question. He (Sir Joseph Pease) had had to look up Parliamentary precedents on this great question of the Oath. The first man whom he believed presented himself at the Table of the House to affirm did so in the year 1698, when John Archdale, elected Member for High Wycombe, refused to take the Oath on conscientious grounds—on the ground that George Fox had declared as his objection to all oaths. George Fox said—"You say, 'Kiss the Book;' and the Book says 'Swear not at all.'" Those were the simple words which influenced John Archdale, who declared that he was perfectly willing to discharge his duty to his Sovereign and his country if he were permitted to do so without taking the Oath. The Speaker laid John Archdale's letter upon the Table of the House, but the House directed a new Writ to issue. Nearly 150 years then elapsed before the question was again raised, when it came up again in the case of a relative of his own, who was elected Member for South Durham in the first Reform Parliament. This Gentleman, as a Quaker, had a conscientious scruple against taking the Oath. There were in his day, as there were now-a-days, a number of men who objected to Affirmations quite as strongly as those who had to-day addressed the House at such length. The case of Joseph Pease was considered very carefully, and a very remarkable Committee had been appointed to look into the question. On the 8th February, 1833, a Committee was struck, consisting of Viscount Althorp, the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, Mr. Williams Wynn, Mr. Abercromby, Dr. Lushington, Mr. O'Connell, Mr. Littleton, Sir Edward Knatchbull, Mr. Cartwright, Mr. Scarlett, Sir Robert Peel, Lord John Russell, Mr. Pollock, Viscount Ebrington, Sir Robert H. Inglis, Mr. Goulburn, Mr. Wrottesley, Mr. Bonham-Carter, Mr. Nicolson Calvert, and Mr. Warburton. The question was evidently considered most important, as this was, perhaps, the strongest Committee that the House of Commons of that day could afford. They sat, and reported their conclusion that a Quaker, at any rate, had a right to sit in that House on his Affirmation. He (Sir Joseph Pease) had been allowed to take his seat in that House in six Parliaments on taking his Affirmation, and many others had taken their seats on their Affirmation under this decision. When he first took the Affirmation it was accompanied with a very long rigmarole—he was going to say, but that word would not be perhaps decorous—at any rate, it was accompanied by a long declaration of loyalty, but that had been abolished for many years past. Ever since 1833 a long roll of Members had been allowed to sit upon their Affirmation. In Courts of Law, although he had never served upon a petty jury, he and others with him had been special jurymen, and he and his friends who were similarly situated had been allowed to affirm, and, he thought he might say, had always done their duty. He had had the honour of not unfrequently serving his Queen and country upon the Grand Jury, and sometimes had been called upon to act as foreman of the jury, and it was worthy of remark that at these times the gentlemen whom he headed had sworn to "observe and keep" those things to which he had previously affirmed. Hon. Members who opposed this measure sought to set up a double standard of truth —one standard of truth to which a man was to pledge his word; another to which he was to pledge his oath—which he thought would be very detrimental to true morality. The objection to Affirmations had not been confined to that House. In the Reign of William and Mary, previous to 1696, an Act was passed, and there was a declaration of faith before taking an Affirmation. In 1696 that was altered, and the Quaker affirmed "before God and the World." But in 1721 the simple form of Affirmation, which was now taken, became law—"I, A. B., do solemnly, sincerely, and truly declare and affirm," &c. This was brought into the House of Lords, and passed in that House as in this House. But in that day there was a great objection to so simple a form of Affirmation being taken, and a clause was moved and negatived to the effect—

> "That no Quaker or reputed Quaker shall have or enjoy any benefit intended by this Act who shall not have subscribed the profession of their Christian belief set down and required by an Act passed in the first year of the reign of King William and Mary."

To this declaration he had just referred. That, as he said, was negatived, but reference to the records of the other House would show that a Protest was lodged there against the passing of the Bill, which was signed by the Archbishop of York, the Bishops of Oxford and Rochester, and Lords Gower, Mountjoy, Strafford, St. John of Bletso, Salisbury, Aberdeen, Trevor, and Compton. The Protest was in this form—

> "Because we look upon the Quakers who reject the true Sacrament of Christ—and are, so far as they so do, unworthy of the name of Christians—to be on that account unworthy also of receiving such distinguished marks of favour, because where Nobles, Clergy, and Commons take the oath, this sect, who refused to be soldiers, should not be exempt. Since it is natural to expect that persons so indulged as to the manner of professing and the manner of performing their allegiance should by degrees be induced totally to withdraw it till they become as bad subjects as they are Christians."

He (Sir Joseph Pease) thought he might appeal to history to show that Quakers had never been either bad subjects or bad Christians. The real way to make bad subjects and bad Christians was by carrying matters of such kind too far. He thought there was nothing which had occurred on this subject more detrimental to the solemn character of an oath than to see the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) swearing himself at the Table, knowing, as everyone did, the views that he held. He (Sir Joseph Pease) had never been one of those who had voted with the Members generally of his own Party, as he had either not voted or had gone into the Lobby against the hon. Member for Northampton taking the Oath. The hon. Member, in examination by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James), had made the declaration that the last words in the oath were to him "merely a form of asseveration." After that he (Sir Joseph Pease) had never gone into the Lobby in favour of the hon. Member taking the Oath. Years passed by, and the sad scenes, if he might call them so, of 1882 and 1883 passed away. The hon. Member for Northampton had, on the calling of a new Parliament, at last went up to the Table and took the Oath, no one objecting to his doing so. The hon. Member had taken his seat, and since then had taken a very active part in the Business of the House. Were they to go back to scenes of the kind they had witnessed as scenes to be again enacted in the future, or have one standard of truth? Should they not adopt the system which prevailed in civil and in criminal cases in Courts of Law, and under which many Members of the House had taken their seats? The House had no right to ask a man what his religious belief was—whether he believed in a God or whether he did not believe in a God, or whether he believed in eternity or whether he did not believe in eternity, or whether he believed in transubstantiation or did not believe in transubstantiation. They had no right to ask such questions. To his mind more damage was done to the cause of religion and truth by trying to force these distinctions into Acts of Parliament and into the conduct of men than would be done by leaving men to act upon their simple declarations, standing up before God and their fellow-men, if they believed in God, declaring they would do that which was right according to their consciences.

Mr. DARLING (Deptford) said, that he did not approach the consideration of the Bill with any irreconcilable feeling of hostility, or, indeed, with any feeling of hostility at all. If he thought that any safeguards were provided against the latitude it allowed, or that it were possible to introduce such safeguards, he would vote for the measure. In listening to the opening remarks of the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh), and of other hon. Members during the debate, he was struck by the fact that in what professed to be a *résumé* of the law upon the subject all reference to the Acts of Parliament to which the hon. Baronet the Member for the Barnard Castle Division of Durham (Sir Joseph Pease) had alluded for the first time, was omitted. He meant the Acts 17 and 18 *Vict.*, and 24 & 25 *Vict.*, as to Civil and Criminal Courts respectively. These Acts were much less stringent as to declarations to be made by persons not Christians than the Acts which were afterwards passed. He confessed that if this Bill had contained such a clause as that to be found in 17 & 18 *Vict.* c. 25 s. 20, it would meet the objections that he and many who sat around him felt to the Bill. The 32 & 33 *Vict.* c. 68 had been quoted, by which an affirmation was permitted if the presiding Judge should be satisfied that an oath had no binding effect upon the conscience of the person about to be sworn. But 17 & 18 *Vict.* c. 25 as to civil causes, and 24 & 25 *Vict.* c. 66 as to criminal matters, provided that if any person called as a witness should refuse or be unwilling, from any alleged conscientious objection, to be sworn, it should be lawful for the Court or Judge, being satisfied of the sincerity of the objection, to permit him to make an affirmation. That was a most valuable provision which was altogether omitted from the Bill of the hon. Member for Northampton. Under the present Bill a person had simply to say, "I object to be sworn,"—although he might have been sworn many times before—and not "I object to take any oath." It was a fact within his experience, and he had noticed it particularly in the neighbourhood of the Principality, in Shropshire, and Monmouthshire, that there were many persons with particularly scrupulous consciences, who nevertheless did not intend to tell the exact truth and who went through various dodges, such as had been mentioned by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Oswestry Division of Shropshire (Mr. Stanley Leighton), to get out of taking an oath, though all the time subjecting themselves to a prosecution for perjury. This was no visionary objection, for there were numbers of men who would commit perjury on a simple statement, though they would tell the truth if they called God to witness their act. He was sorry to hear the hon. and learned Member for Dewsbury (Sir John Simon) say that in Courts of Justice, where he and others had cross-examined, the witnesses were not treated as truthful even when they had taken the oath to tell the truth. He was glad to say that was not his experience in the Courts in which he himself had practised. However much that might be the case on the Northern Circuit, on the Oxford Circuit, with which he was acquainted, it was not suggested to witnesses under cross-examination that they were not going to tell the truth, but the fact was merely recalled and brought home to their notice that they were standing upon their oath. The important objection to this Bill was that the latitude it allowed was too great, and that it had not sufficient safeguards. As it stood, it came to this, that the Bill aimed—and the hon. Member opposite had admitted it—at the abolition of the oath. That in his opinion would be a dangerous course to take. He admitted that with regard to freethinkers the abolition of the oath would have no effect at all, but with regard to the enormous class who believed in the obligation of an oath—and they were by far the majority—the simple abolition of the oath would set them free from an obligation which at present pressed upon them. His point was, that there being men upon whom an oath had a particular binding effect, which it had not upon men who did not hold any religious opinions, the State was justified in demanding, when a man came to give his testimony, that it should be given with the greatest security for its truth that could be obtained. There had been many cases in which a man, not thinking he was giving the highest security known to his conscience, yet trifled with his oath. He would quote an authority that would probably meet with the respect of hon. Members opposite. It was the well known case of Harold, who took the oath of fealty to the Duke of Normandy, but afterwards finding he had been pledged over the relics of saints while he was taking that oath, he broke it, alleging that he was ignorant of the presence of the relics when he swore. The one historian whom hon. Members opposite allowed to be entitled to much weight (Professor Freeman), writing of this particular instance—and he (Mr. Darling) thought the remark was of general application—said—

> "In any enlightened view of morality, one promise is as binding as another; the word of an honest man is as sacred as a thousand oaths. But the fact that oaths are required among all nations and under all religions shows that this is a morality so high that the mass of mankind do not ractically act upon it."

As a practical matter and adjudicature was that, they were bound to get the greatest security they could that truth would be spoken; and according to Professor Freeman nothing but an oath bound the consciences of a large body of men. But Professor Freeman only said what had been said, in effect, long before by the great lawyer, Sir William Blackstone. He wrote (3 Com., 341)—

> "It must be owned great numbers will certainly speak truth without an oath; and too many will not speak it with one. But the generality of mankind are of a middle sort; neither so virtuous as to be safely trusted, in cases of importance, on their bare word, nor yet so abandoned as to violate a more solemn engagement. Accordingly we find by experience that many will boldly say what they will by no means adventure to swear, and the difference which they make between these two things is often, indeed, much greater than they should, but still it shows the need of insisting on the strongest security."

If that were true in the time of Sir William Blackstone, it was just as true now. Hon. Members from Scotland would admit the authority of Lord Stair, who in his *Institutes of the Laws of Scotland*, p. 692, said—

> "It is the duty of Judges, in taking the oaths of witnesses, to do it in those forms that will most touch the conscience of the swearers according to their persuasion and custom."

He was not concerned in affirming that what the hon. Member offered was not the strongest form of security for those who held no form of religious belief, but there were believers, and they had a right to ask, in the words of Sir William Blackstone, for the "strongest security" that a witness spoke the truth, and if an oath provided that, then the oath should not be abolished. Moreover, it was not only a matter which concerned Christians. Chinese, Mahomedans, and other persons professing Eastern religions, frequently gave evidence in our Courts of Justice, and at present the Judge had to find out what kind of oath these men considered was binding on their consciences. Unless the various descriptions of foreigners were sworn according to oaths that bound their consciences, there was no security that they would speak the truth. Everyone knew that in the case of Chinamen, it was the breaking of a saucer, the witness believing that he would be broken also if he did not tell the truth. Those who had any experience of the Natives of India also knew that there were certain books and ceremonies which bound them to speak the truth, and that no other books or ceremonies would bind them. Such persons might come into our Courts and say they objected to be sworn, and would then simply have to make an affirmation which they did not value one straw. That was a consideration which ought not to be put out of sight when they voted upon this measure. It had been long recognized that a Judge ought to find out what was the best sanction which he could get when a promise to give testimony was made. What he had referred to as being given by Lord Stair put the matter in such a way that it would deal with all the people of the various religions to which he (Mr. Darling) had referred. But it would be impossible to do that if every witness had the loophole which the hon. Member for Northampton would provide for him. In various States of America a difficulty had arisen which would be certain to arise under the present Bill. If a man objected to be sworn, that fact might afterwards be commented on by counsel with the object of discrediting the witness. He did not say every counsel would do it; but he objected to the possibility of subjecting witnesses to such an indignity. Seeing that, the law had provided the means in Courts of Justice for a witness to give his testimony on affirmation where there had been a grievance which made it necessary to alter that law, and to leave out all kinds of appeals to a man's conscience. The Courts at present might say that an objection raised by a witness was a conscientious objection; but this Bill would allow him to make an objection whether the objection was conscientious or not. He should like to say a word with regard to the case of Lennard, to which reference had been made. He took it that every man, whether he believed in God or not, could not escape having a conscience, and he was free to admit that an Atheist acted according to his conscience as often as a believer did. In that case, the magistrate decided wrongly, and the Court of Queen's Bench, by issuing a *mandamus* instantly, put the matter right. The case was not reported, he imagined, simply because there was an egregious blunder on the part of the magistrate, which no magistrate could possibly make again. The hon. Member for Northampton, with his specialist knowledge of the subject, could only adduce this single case.

Mr. BRADLAUGH said, he quoted another case before the Lord Chief Justice, in which several witnesses were challenged, and a delay of seven or eight minutes occurred because this point was raised.

Mr. DARLING said, he would accept the hon. Member's correction. And so it appeared that, in the course of many years, owing to the law as it stood being in operation, a delay of seven or eight minutes had taken place in a particular case. After all, was that a valid reason for changing the law of the land? He was anxious to have the law altered as far as it related to the Parliamentary Oath, and also as to oaths of a different character, if there were a difficulty in regard to them. He saw no necessity, however, for altering the law in regard to oaths and affirmations in Courts of Justice. If it were altered he should like to see it done on the lines of the Acts of the 17th and 18th and 24th and 25th *Vict.*, to which he had already alluded. If he had seen anything like that in the Bill he would have voted for it. Indeed, if he saw any certain prospect of such an Amendment coming into the Bill he would vote for the second reading now; but as he could not see that, and the Bill was to remain as it was, he was unable to support the Bill.

Mr. W. A. MACDONALD (Queen's County, Ossory) said, he had had no personal quarrel with the hon. Member for Mid Leicestershire (Mr. De Lisle), and he only interrupted the hon. Gentleman because he introduced so much theology into his speech, and he (Mr. Macdonald) did not think that such considerations really tended in any way to clear the issue before the House. He had listened with great interest, as, no doubt, all Members present had, to the speech in which the hon. Gentleman the Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) moved the second reading of this Bill, but he could not help thinking that, after all, the hon. Gentleman scarcely touched the most important point which they, as legislators and as statesmen, had really to consider. Surely the question on this occasion was not what their personal feelings or wishes might be, not what was convenient to them as Members of Parliament, not what was agreeable to the educated classes generally, but how they could best bring it to pass that there should be as much speaking of the truth and as little perjury in our Courts of Justice as possible. He confessed he did not think any of the arguments he had heard on his, the Opposition side of the House, really met the difficulty, and he was glad this was an entirely open question, and free from all considerations of party. Everybody knew there was an immense deal of perjury in our Courts of Justice, and Parliament should do everything in its power to prevent the chance of that perjury being increased. He had not the smallest doubt that there was a considerable number of ignorant people who, if this Bill passed in its present form, would make it an excuse for not telling the truth in Courts of Justice, because they might affirm instead of taking the oath. That was one point which pressed very heavily on his mind; it was the point which he considered really worthy of careful consideration. He should be glad, like the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Darling) who had just addressed the House for the first time, and to whose speech they all listened with interest, to relieve Members of Parliament, and all those upon whose conscience the taking of an Oath pressed, from the necessity of taking that Oath, but the words of the Bill were too wide, they embraced too many persons, and were too liable to abuse. The words were—

> "Every person objecting to being sworn shall be permitted to make his solemn affirmation."

He let hon. Members consider the practical consequences of such words. He knew more about Ireland, perhaps, than about other parts of the United Kingdom, but he was sure the same thing occurred in England and in Scotland as in Ireland. There were many people who would be slow to speak falsely, if they thought they would have to take God to witness that they were speaking the truth; whereas they would think it a much less heinous offence to speak untruly if they were allowed to make a mere affirmation. He wanted to tell the hon. Member for Northampton quite frankly that he felt exactly as the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Mr. Darling). If he were satisfied that in Committee words would be introduced into the Bill which would make it quite clear that it was only persons who had conscientious objection to taking the Oath who would be relieved in this manner, he would at once vote for the second reading of the Bill. If such words were not introduced, if the present latitude remained, and if there was the present liability to abuse, he could not conscientiously—and he had travelled 27 miles to-day for the purpose of saying this—he could not conscientiously vote for the Bill.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight) said, the debate had been conducted in a temper which both sides of the House must approve. It had cleared away any atmosphere of Party spirit and any desire to discuss this question except on the broadest possible lines. One hon. Member had objected that this measure was not taken up by the Government; but he thought it was satisfactory that the Government should not take it up, inasmuch as it was a question which ought to be separated altogether from Party bias, and they should express their feelings with perfect freedom. He desired to say a few words upon what was the real principle of this Bill, because it was to the principle of the Bill that he objected. The Bill was open to very serious attack, and he wished to declare his intention of voting against the second reading. This was an attempt to remove from everybody by a simple objection the responsibility of taking an oath without any reason being given for the objection. Nobody who had had legal experience, or who had studied the history of Courts of Justice, would deny that not a few men had been checked in saying what was false by taking an oath. What did the hon. Member for Northampton propose? Though a witness might be one of those men who was prepared if he were not put upon oath to make a statement which he would not make if he were sworn, the hon. Member proposed that, without giving any reason, that man by simply objecting might remove the security which in other circumstances would exist for his telling the truth. The State was entitled and bound to get the highest security which a man could give for the absolute truth of what he stated in Courts of Justice. Assuming that only once in 100 times a witness was checked by the fact that he had called the Almighty to witness, they ought not to remove that safeguard in favour of the security that truth was being told. He desired to say a few words with regard to his own personal experience. He did not think that anyone who had been engaged in cases in which the lower order of the people were witnesses would deny that over and over again men had gone back from what they had previously said, and had told the truth when they were reminded that they were giving their evidence upon oath. The hon. and learned Member for Deptford (Mr. Darling)—and he must be allowed to congratulate him on his speech—said truly that what was required was to get the highest security a man could give as to the absolute truth of what a man said in a Court of Justice. He was surprised to hear the hon. and learned Serjeant opposite (Sir John Simon) say he thought an oath did not have the effect of inducing witnesses to tell the truth, as the contrary was conclusively shown by the subterfuges which some witnesses resorted to, such as avoiding to kiss the Book. We ought not to remove this safeguard, which, in his own experience, had been found to be of very considerable value. But there were other serious objections to the measure as it stood. On what grounds of public policy or convenience was a man, simply by saying "I object," and without stating his reasons, to be allowed to avoid the oath? The case had to be considered as applicable to Parliamentary Oaths, to the oaths of witnesses, to promissory oaths, and to the oaths of jurors. Hon. Members would not willingly recognize the principle that in solemn proceedings a man should be allowed to cloak and cover up the fact that he was an Atheist. If this alteration of the law was to be made, he should insist, in the interests of truth and justice, upon one safeguard—that if a man objected to take an oath because he was an

Atheist, he should come forward boldly and say that he was an Atheist. He did not think the hon. Member for Northampton personally would object to do so, but they could not argue this question with reference to that hon. Gentleman's conduct. There was another class of objections that required to be met. Was the relief proposed to be given by the Bill required by all classes and for all purposes? In his opinion there was a broad distinction between Parliamentary Oaths and the oaths of jurors and witnesses in Courts of Law. If a constituency had elected an individual who openly declared himself an Atheist, strong Constitutional reasons might be urged why the Legislature ought not to prevent the representation of that place by refusing to allow the Member to take his seat. But this Bill was not confined to Parliamentary Oaths. It related to every occasion on which an oath was to be taken, in all cases and for all purposes. He submitted that all those arguments which might be of some force and effect in connection with the right of a freely elected person to sit in that House had not the slightest application when we came to deal with this Bill as applied to the other cases. If Atheists were to be allowed to serve on juries they ought to state that they were Atheists, and if one of the parties interested objected to be tried by an Atheist he should be allowed to take the objection. The hon. Baronet opposite (Sir Joseph Pease) said that we ought not to have two standards of truth. He would suggest that the hon. Baronet had altogether misunderstood the argument adduced on that side of the House. They were not setting up two standards of truth. They were only trying to see that those who were called upon to give evidence and to perform high Constitutional duties should adopt the highest standard of truth. It could not be said that because they caused particular acts to be performed with the greatest solemnity they were setting up a second standard of truth. When dealing with investigations in Courts of Justice the Legislature had thought fit to remove a disability and enable persons to give their evidence without being sworn by making a simple affirmation. But that provision in no way applied to jurors, and it ought to be adopted only in cases where it was desirable in the interests of justice that the alteration in the law should be made. As he had already pointed out, the principle of the Bill was open to objection on the ground that it would encourage persons who intended to lie, so far as their consciences were concerned, to lie without hesitation; and, further, that no grievance had been pointed out calling for the measure. Although in connection with Parliamentary Oaths it might be possible for some of those on that side of the House to vote for some carefully framed measure, yet to this Bill they must offer the strongest opposition in their power. He might, however, observe that in making this declaration he was speaking simply and solely as a private Member and not in any official capacity. With regard to a Commission of Inquiry, he held that all the materials were before them, and that there was nothing left for it to inquire into.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby) said, that he agreed with the Attorney General that they had every reason to be satisfied at the moderate spirit in which this measure had been discussed. The Attorney General, who had said that the sentiments he expressed were his own and not those of the Government, had stated that he based his opposition to the Bill on the ground of principle. But he (Sir William Harcourt) could not make out what that principle was, though he had heard from the hon. and learned Gentleman a great deal of argument on matters of detail that were susceptible of alteration. What was the principle of the Bill? The principle was that a man who objected to take an oath should be permitted to make an affirmation. He would advise all who desired to understand the subject of oaths to read the Report of the Royal Commission signed by Lord Sherbrooke. The principle of binding the conscience of a man by an oath, once so universally applied in every relation of life, was now in a great degree got rid of. The Attorney General admitted that he would not object to a Bill dispensing with Parliamentary Oaths, and, therefore, his objection was not to the principle of the Bill. In the Bill of 1883 there was no condition required for making an affirmation but the objection of a Member to take an oath. That Bill was discussed with a great deal of heat and Party spirit, and it received the support of the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) and the present Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen). There was one observation of the Attorney General with which he could not agree, and that was that when a man came forward to make a declaration he must declare what he was. That used to be done with reference to Dissenters—in the first measure for the Abolition of Disabilities they were compelled to come forward and plead their dissent. That passed into the phrase of "ticketing" Dissenters. He had heard with great satisfaction the very moderate and reasonable speech of the hon. and learned Member for Deptford, who expressed himself satisfied that a man should be relieved from the necessity of taking an oath if asked for on the ground of conscientious objection. Personally he should insist upon that stipulation, and it well deserved the consideration of the hon. Member for Northampton, whether some provision of that sort could not be introduced into the Bill to remove the difficulty of hon. Members on the other side of the House who shared the views of the hon. and learned Member for Deptford. [Mr. BRADLAUGH signified his assent.] He was glad that the hon. Member for Northampton assented to that course, and he saw no reason why the second reading should not be carried. He hoped that concession would meet the views of the hon. and learned Member for Deptford. [Mr. DARLING: Hear, hear!] He did not say all objections that might still remain to the Bill would be removed, but it certainly would remove the main objection. He was quite sure there was no desire on the part of the hon. Member for Northampton or of any hon. Gentleman on that side of the House to resist any reasonable alteration in the measure. In the heated debates of 1883 both Sir Stafford Northcote and Sir Richard Cross admitted the unsatisfactory character of the existing condition of the Parliamentary Oath, though they were not willing to take the course which the Government of the day recommended. He remembered that at the time the popular phrase was—"We think there ought to be legislation, but we will not have it in the form of a Bradlaugh Relief Bill." Now the hon. Member for Northampton was there with the consent of hon. Gentleman opposite. The Leaders of the Conservative Party at that time thought the existing condition of things unsatisfactory and only to be removed by legislation; and, under those circumstances, after the indication they had received of the disposition on the part of the promoters to amend the Bill, he hoped the House would accord it a second reading.

MR. BRADLAUGH said, it might be convenient that he should now state the course he proposed to follow in Committee. The hon. and learned Member for Deptford had suggested a form of words providing that—

> "No person should be allowed to make such solemn affirmation except he alleged as his ground for objecting to be sworn a conscientious objection to taking an oath."

Without binding himself to these exact words, he should be disposed to accept those words or any words that were considered in Committee best capable of giving effect to the meaning those words were intended to convey. He felt that a large number of Members had come to the consideration of this question with a desire to avoid irritation; and on his part he desired to consider objections that had a reasonable basis. He regretted to have heard a phrase which implied that the refusal to take an oath necessarily involved immorality of conduct; and if he did not discuss that implication he hoped the House would not think it was because he assented to it. With reference to his interruption of the hon. Member for Stockport, he thought that nothing could be more clear than that in the statement of reasons which had been circulated the words quoted were part of the judgment of the Court of Queen's Bench, and were in no sense given as expressing the views of the promoters of the Bill.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir EDWARD CLARKE) (Plymouth) said, that, although it would not be convenient to discuss the Amendment which had been suggested and was accepted by the hon. Member for Northampton, the words did not wholly meet the objections that had been made. They only referred to those who alleged a conscientious objection to take an oath.

MR. BRADLAUGH wished to add that in Committee he should not object to any words which were found by the majority to fairly embody the feelings expressed on both sides of the House.

SIR EDWARD CLARKE said, he was glad that that larger statement had been made. He thought, however, it was essential, in order to meet objections that had been made from both sides of the House, not only that those who objected on religious grounds, but also that those who from want of religious belief altogether would not hold themselves bound by an oath, should be required to state the fact before they were permitted to affirm. ["Oh, oh!"] Certainly unless that concession was made—although he should vote for the second reading of the Bill, believing that it gave Parliament an opportunity of dealing with a difficult subject on which legislation was necessary—unless the Proviso were inserted as to both classes of cases, he should resist the third reading of the Bill.

MR. BRADLAUGH said, he appreciated the distinction, and would accept any words that were not absolutely offensive that would cover the cases of both classes of persons.

SIR EDWARD CLARKE said, he was glad to have got that further assurance. He would like to add that there were words in the Statute Book which caused great difficulty and which he should like to see removed. They were the words requiring that when a person claimed to affirm, the Judge should satisfy himself as to the oath not having a binding effect upon that person's conscience. This was a most difficult provision, administered differently in different Courts and by different Judges, and he would be very glad if the whole rule with regard to the taking of oaths could be reduced to one intelligible and simple rule. One serious difficulty that was not touched by the Bill was one that had arisen in a case in which the hon. Member for Northampton was himself a litigant. If the Bill were passed in its present form it would be open for any Member introduced to the House either to take the Oath without question or to claim to affirm; but, as the Bill now stood, if he came to the Table and without question took the Oath, it would afterwards be in the power of a Court of Law to examine whether at the time he took the Oath he was a person subject to those influences which were believed to give the Oath its sanctity and force. It had been settled by the Courts that if an oath were taken by a person who at the time was without religious convictions, he could be treated as if he had never taken the oath at all. It would be a most unhappy thing if the Bill should leave Parliament without a provision that no question should be subsequently raised as to the condition of mind of the person when taking the oath [Mr. BRADLAUGH: Hear, hear!] One other serious question raised by the Bill was the case of the evidence of children in Courts of Justice. He was not prepared at that time to suggest a way in which they ought to be met, but it was a matter that required very serious consideration. At present children were taken into Court to be examined as witnesses, and before examination they were interrogated by the Judge with regard to their religious belief, so that the Court might know that the statements they were going to make should be statements given under the sanction of something that would influence them to tell the truth. If the Bill passed in its present form all that would disappear. When the Criminal Law Amendment Bill was before the House he was in favour of permitting very young children to give evidence without being sworn; but this was a very large question, and in a great many criminal cases it would be very dangerous to accept the testimony of children without obliging the Court to take some care as to the way in which the child was going to give its evidence. After the statements that had been made, it was not necessary to discuss further the question of the second reading of the Bill; but he quite agreed with the Attorney General, from some experience of Courts of Justice, in the opinion that the taking of an oath was a substantial guarantee of the truth of the evidence given. This was shown by the reference so often made to the oath in cross-examination. Recalling to his mind several of the most important cases that had taken place within the last few years, he was quite sure that witnesses had been absent from Court who would have been there had it not been that they had to face the responsibility of repeating on oath the statements they had made. He would be very glad if the thorny controversy could be settled in the way suggested by the Bill as amended, and felt justified in fulfilling his original intention of supporting the second reading.

Mr. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse) said, he was entirely opposed to any compromise on this question. He decidedly thought that the measure brought forward by the junior Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) had reference to matters in the past which he did not want to touch upon in any personal sense, but could not altogether forget. It was generally the view of the Liberal and Radical Party opposite that the wish of the majority of the House should influence their decision; but in this case it was but an infinitesimal portion of the House that promoted the measure; and he said that in deference to the opinion of a vast portion of the people of England who were not in favour of it, that the Bill should be thrown out. If he were not afraid of using stronger language than was usual in that House, he should apply to it the name of the Atheists Relief Bill; at any rate, it had been so understood, and he considered that at least those who were concerned with it should state that they believed in an Almighty Being. He maintained that if the House passed a Bill at all, it should be one that recognized the Divine Presence amongst them. He appealed not only to the Government, but to the great Nonconformist Party in the House—God-fearing men—not to allow this principle to go forward, and he would also appeal to the Irish Party, who he hoped would not be disposed to pass the Bill. For his own part, if that were the last time he should speak in that House, he would oppose any measure that would open its doors to such as were contemplated by this measure.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, he should support the second reading of the Bill. Agreeing, as he did, with a good deal that had been said with regard to the oath in Court, he thought the Bill was capable of alteration in Committee, and upon that understanding, which had been clearly stated by the hon. and learned Solicitor General, he should support the Motion. He thought it a scandal that Members who believed in the sanctity of an oath should have to be parties to allowing those who openly stated that they were Atheists to profane the Oath by going through the form of taking it on the assembly of each new Parliament. He should support the motion in order that that scandal might be done away with.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 247; Noes 137: Majority 110.—(Div. List, No. 38.)

Main Question again proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. NORRIS: I beg to move, as an Amendment, that the Bill be read this day six months.

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I wish to second the Amendment.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House having agreed that the words "That the Bill be now read a second time" stand part of the Question, the hon. Gentleman cannot now make that Motion. It is competent to him to object when the Question is put from the Chair, "That the Bill be now read a second time," but not to move an Amendment.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, they had heard certain proposals made with regard to the Bill which had been agreed to by some Members; but the House were not in possession of the exact nature of the alterations. He thought that unless they had before them in black and white what kind of Bill it was suggested they should pass, they were not in as fair a position as they ought to be when asked to decide upon the second reading of a Bill of that nature. Because many hon. Gentlemen wished to know exactly what the Bill was intended to be, he should move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Mr. SPEAKER: Does any hon. Member second that Motion?

Mr. MARK STEWART rose——

Mr. BRADLAUGH: I claim to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put accordingly, "That the Question be now put."

The House *divided*:—Ayes 334; Noes 50: Majority 284.—(Div. List, No. 39.)

Main Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 250; Noes 150: Majority 100.

AYES.

Abraham, W. (Glamorgan.)
Acland, A. H. D.
Acland, C. T. D.
Agg-Gardner, J. T.
Ainslie, W. G.
Anderson, C. H.
Asquith, H. H.
Balfour, Sir G.
Balfour, rt. hon. J. B.
Banes, Major G. E.
Barbour, W. B.
Barclay, J. W.
Bartley, G. C. T.
Beaumont, W. B.
Bentinck, W. G. C.
Beresford Lord C. W. de la Poer
Bethell, Commander G. R.
Bickford-Smith, W.
Biddulph, M.
Biggar, J. G.
Blane, A.
Bolton, J. C.
Bolton, T. D.
Bright, Jacob
Bright, W. L.
Broadhurst, H.
Brown, A. H.
Bryce, J.
Buchanan, T. R.
Burt, T.
Byrne, G. M.
Caine, W. S.
Caldwell, J.
Cameron, J. M.
Campbell, Sir G.
Campbell-Bannerman, right hon. H.
Carew, J. L.
Causton, R. K.
Chamberlain, R.
Channing, F. A.
Childers, rt. hon. H. C. E.
Churchill, rt. hn. Lord R. H. S.
Clancy, J. J.
Clarke, Sir E. G.
Clark, Dr. G. B.
Cobb, H. P.
Coghill, D. H.
Collings, J.
Colman, J. J.
Conway, M.
Corbet, W. J.
Corbett, A. C.
Cossham, H.
Cotton, Capt. E. T. D.
Courtney, L. H.
Cozens-Hardy, H. H.
Craig, J.
Craven, J.
Crawford, D.
Crawford, W.
Cremer, W. R.
Crossley, E.
Crossman, Gen. Sir W.
Darling, C. J.
Davenport, H. T.
Davies, W.
Deasy, J.
Dillon, J.
Dillwyn, L. L.
Dixon, G.
Dodds, J.
Duff, R. W.
Ebrington, Viscount
Edwards-Moss, T. C.
Elcho, Lord
Elliot, hon. A. R. D.
Elliot, hon. H. F. H.
Ellis, J.
Ellis, J. E.
Ellis, T. E.
Esslemont, P.
Eyre, Colonel H.
Farquharson, Dr. R.
Fenwick, C.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro-
Firth, J. F. B.
Fisher, W. H.
Flower, C.
Foley, P. J.
Forster, Sir C.
Fowler, rt. hn. H. H.
Fry, L.
Gardner, H.
Gaskell, C. G. Milnes-
Gill, T. P.
Gladstone, right hon. W. E.
Gladstone, H. J.
Goldsmid, Sir J.
Gourley, E. T.
Green, Sir E.
Grey, Sir E.
Gurdon, R. T.
Haldane, R. B.
Hanbury-Tracy, hon. F. S. A.
Harcourt, rt. hon. Sir W. G. V. V.
Harrington, E.
Harris, M.
Hartington, Marquess of
Hastings, G. W.
Hayden, L. P.
Hayne, C. Seale-
Healy, T. M.
Heathcote, Capt. J. H. Edwards-
Heneage, right hon. E
Hermon-Hodge, R. T.
Hervey, Lord F.
Hingley, B.
Hoare, E. B.
Hobhouse, H.
Holden, I.
Houldsworth, Sir W. H.
Howell, G.
Hoyle, I.
Hunter, W. A.
Isaacs, L. H.
James, hon. W. H.
Jardine, Sir R.
Kay-Shuttleworth, rt. hon. Sir U. J.
Kenny, C. S.
Kenrick, W.
Kerans, F. H.
Kilbride, D.
King, H. S.
Labouchere, H.
Lalor, R.
Lawson, H. L. W.
Lea, T.
Lewis, T. P.
Long, W. H.
Lubbock, Sir J.
Lyell, L.
Macdonald, W. A.
Mac Innes, M.
Mackintosh, C. F.
Maclean, F. W.
Maclean, J. M.
M'Arthur, A.
M'Arthur, W. A.
M'Donald, Dr. R.
M'Ewan, W.
M'Lagan, P.
M'Laren, W. S. B.
Maitland, W. F.
Mappin, Sir F. T.
Maskelyne, M. H. N. Story-
Menzies, R. S.
Montagu, S.
Morgan, rt. hon. G. O.
Morgan, O. V.
Morley, rt. hon. J.
Morley, A.
Morrison, W.
Mowbray, R. G. C.
Mundella, rt. hon. A. J.
Neville, R.
Newnes, G.
Nolan, J.
O'Brien, J. F. X.
O'Brien, P.
O'Brien, P. J.
O'Connor, J.
O'Connor, T. P.
O'Hanlon, T.
O'Kelly, J.
Palmer, Sir C. M.
Parker, C. S.
Parnell, C. S.
Paulton, J. M.
Pease, Sir J. W.
Pease, A. E.
Pickard, B.
Pickersgill, E. H.
Picton, J. A.
Playfair, right hon. Sir L.
Plowden, Sir W. C.
Portman, hon. E. B.
Potter, T. B.
Power, P. J.
Price, T. P.
Priestley, B.
Puleston, Sir J. H.
Quilter, W. C.
Rathbone, W.
Reed, Sir E. J.
Reed, R. T.
Rendel, S.
Richard, H.
Richardson, T.
Robertson, E.
Robinson, B.
Roe, T.
Rollit, Sir A. K.
Rothschild, Baron F. J. de
Rowlands, J.
Rowntree, J.
Russell, Sir C.
Russell, T. W.
Samuelson, Sir B.
Samuelson, G. B.
Sellar, A. C.
Selwyn, Captain C. W
Sidebotham, J. W.
Simon, Sir J.
Sinclair, W. P.
Slagg, J.
Spencer, hon. C. R.
Stanhope, hon. P. J.
Stevenson, F. S.
Stewart, H.
Stuart, J.
Sullivan, D.
Summers, W.
Sutherland, A.
Sutherland, T.
Taylor, F.
Thomas, A.
Thorburn, W.
Tollemache, H. J.
Trevelyan, right hon. Sir G. O.
Tuite, J.
Vivian, Sir H. H.
Wardle, H.
Warmington, C. M.
Watt, H.
Wayman, T.
West, Colonel W. C.
Whitbread, S.
Wiggin, H.
Will, J. S.
Williams, J. Powell-
Wilson, H. J.
Wilson, I.
Winterbotham, A. B.
Wodehouse, E. R.
Wolmer, Viscount
Wood, N.
Woodall, W.
Woodhead, J.
Wright, C.
Wright, H. S.

TELLERS.

Bradlaugh, C.
Kelly, J. R.

NOES.

Amherst, W. A. T.
Ashmead-Bartlett, E.
Baird, J. G. A.
Baring, T. C.
Barttelot, Sir W. B.
Bates, Sir E.
Baumann, A. A.
Beach, W. W. B.
Beadel, W. J.
Beckett, W.
Bigwood, J.
Blundell, Col. H. B. H.

Bonsor, H. C. O.
Boord, T. W.
Borthwick, Sir A.
Bridgeman, Col. hon. F. C.
Bristowe, T. L.
Brodrick, hon. W. St. J. F.
Brookfield, A. M.
Burghley, Lord
Campbell, Sir A.
Campbell, J. A.
Carmarthen, Marq. of
Chaplin, right hon. H.
Charrington, S.
Cochrane-Baillie, hon. C. W. A. N.
Colomb, Capt. J. C. R.
Commerell, Adml. Sir J. E.
Corry, Sir J. P.
Cross, H. S.
Curzon, hon. G. N.
Dalrymple, Sir C.
Dawnay, Colonel hon. L. P.
De Lisle, E. J. L. M. P.
De Worms, Baron H.
Dickson, Major A. G.
Dimsdale, Baron R.
Dixon-Hartland, F. D.
Donkin, R. S.
Dorington, Sir J. E.
Douglas, A. Akers-
Dyke, right hon. Sir W. H.
Egerton, hon. A. de T.
Ellis, Sir J. W.
Elton, C. I.
Ewing, Sir A. O.
Farquharson, H. R.
Feilden, Lt.-Gen. R. J.
Fergusson, right hon. Sir J.
Field, Admiral E.
Fielden, T.
Finch, G. H.
Fitzgerald, R. U. P.
Fitz-Wygram, Gen. Sir F. W.
Fowler, Sir R. N.
Fraser, General C. C.
Fulton, J. F.
Gedge, S.
Gent-Davis, R.
Giles, A.
Gilliat, J. S.
Goldsworthy, Major General W. T.
Gorst, Sir J. E.
Grimston, Viscount
Hall, A. W.
Hall, C.
Halsey, T. F.
Hambro, Col. C. J. T.
Hardcastle, E.
Hardcastle, F.
Herbert, hon. S.
Hill, right hon. Lord A. W.
Hill, A. S.
Hoare, S.
Howard, J.
Hozier, J. H. C.
Hubbard, hon. E.
Hughes, Colonel E.
Hughes-Hallett, Col. F. C.
Hunter, Sir W. G.
Jackson, W. L.
Jeffreys, A. F.
Johnston, W.
Kennaway, Sir J. H.
King-Harman, right hon. Colonel E. R.
Knatchbull-Hugessen, H. T.
Knowles, L.
Lafone, A.
Lawrence, Sir J. J. T.
Lechmere, Sir E. A. H.
Lees, E.
Legh, T. W.
Leighton, S.
Lewis, Sir C. E.
Lewisham, right hon. Viscount
Llewellyn, E. H.
Lowther, hon. W.
Lowther, J. W.
Macartney, W. G. E.
Macdonald, rt. hon. J. H. A.
M'Kenna, Sir J. N.
Madden, D. H.
Makins, Colonel W. T.
Maple, J. B.
Maxwell, Sir H. E.
Moss, R.
Mount, W. G.
Mowbray, rt. hon. Sir J. R.
Mulholland, H. L.
Murdoch, C. T.
Noble, W.
Northcote, hon. Sir H. S.
Norton, R.
O'Neill, hon. R. T.
Paget, Sir R. H.
Parker, hon. F.
Pearce, Sir W.
Pelly, Sir L.
Penton, Captain F. T.
Plunket, rt. hon. D. R.
Pomfret, W. P.
Powell, F. S.
Raikes, right hon. H. C.
Reed, H. B.
Round, J.
Russell, Sir G.
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. T. M.
Seton-Karr, H.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H.
Sidebottom, W.
Smith, right hon. W. H.
Smith, A.
Stanhope, rt. hon. E.
Stephens, H. C.
Stewart, M. J.
Talbot, J. G.
Temple, Sir R.
Tomlinson, W. E. M.
Trotter, H. J.
Tyler, Sir H. W.
Walrond, Col. W. H.
Watson, J.
Webster, Sir R. E.
White, J. B.
Whitley, E.
Whitmore, C. A.
Wilson, Sir S.
Wortley, C. B. Stuart-
Wroughton, P.
Young, C. E. B.

TELLERS.
Norris, E. S.
Waring, Colonel T.

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Tuesday*, 27th March.

METROPOLITAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL.—[BILL 14.]

(*Mr. Isaacs, Mr. Kimber, Major General Goldsworthy, Mr. Baumann, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Hunt, Sir Guyer Hunter, Colonel Duncan.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. ISAACS (Newington, Walworth) said, that having regard to the time at which they had arrived (5.20 p.m.), he should probably do better if, instead of moving the second reading of the Bill, he asked Her Majesty's Government to take this subject into their consideration; and he should be glad to be informed if they were in a position to give an assurance that it would receive attention at their hands at an early date. No one could possibly be more impressed with the importance of the measure which he had undertaken to bring under the Notice of the House than himself, because the subject was so vast from every point of view, and affecting as it did the material well-being of 4,000,000 of people, that it was almost Imperial as regarded the interests affected. London had been aptly described as "a Province covered with houses;" and in a debate in that House on the subject of the government of the Metropolis, one of the speakers drew attention to the fact that the London of the present day is bigger, in respect of population, than the whole of England in Queen Elizabeth's time. Its area was upwards of 120 square miles; it contained upwards of 500,000 inhabited houses, occupied by 4,000,000 people, and its rateable value at the present moment was £31,000,000 sterling. He troubled the House with these particulars in order that hon. Members might realize the vastness of the subject and the consequent difficulty of satistorily dealing with it. It occurred to him that before proceeding to expound the details of the measure they were now considering, it might be useful to take a short retrospective glance at the system which prevailed prior to the introduction of Sir Benjamin Hall's Act in 1855, as also of the working of that measure. Prior to the passing of that Act there were no less than 300 different Governing Bodies in the Metropolis, and it had been computed that no fewer than 10,448 persons were engaged either as vestrymen, commissioners of pavements and sewers, &c.; and some notion of the chaos which then prevailed might be gathered from the fact that there were 1,000 persons officially engaged as commissioners of sewers, the number being subsequently reduced to 23, and ultimately to 11. In further illustration of the condition of matters municipal in London at that time, it might be interesting to state that the duty of paving the highway from Temple Bar to Charing Cross was entrusted to no less than seven different Bodies, and in the parish of St. Pancras alone there were as many as 16 Boards, independent of each other, to whom the lighting and paving of that parish were entrusted. It was unnecessary for him to dwell upon the enormous inconvenience to the public, to say nothing of the waste of public money, which ensued from such a system; and the unsanitary condition of London at that time caused the Government to reduce the number of the controlling Bodies who had charge of the sewerage and drainage; but with respect to the remainder of the matters embraced under the head of local management, it was deemed expedient to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the same, and to report as to the best means to be adopted to remedy the existing defects. Accordingly, in June, 1852, a Commission was appointed, consisting of Mr. Labouchere (subsequently Lord Taunton), Mr. Justice Patteson, and Sir George Cornewall Lewis, and their Report dealt very conclusively with the subject. Instead of the Government bringing in a Bill framed on the recommendations of the Commission, and with the double object of saving trouble and of proceeding tentatively, they hit upon the expedient of taking the Poor Law divisions of the Metropolis as the areas of administration, and created 38 Vestries and District Boards, to whom were confided the duties previously discharged by the Commissioners of Paving and other Bodies to whom he had referred. That was a great reform upon the existing state of things; for to reduce the number of the Governing Bodies from 300 to 39, and the number of persons engaged therein from 10,000 to 3,000, must be admitted as a bold step in the right direction. After 33 years' experience, the defects of the present Act had become apparent, and it was desirable now to have some system more in accordance with the municipal institutions throughout the country. The initial error in the Metropolis Local Management Act—an error which had influenced its administration all throughout—was the circumstance that the divisions of the Metropolis which it created, and the mode and manner of the election of those entrusted with carrying out the provisions of the Act, were such as not to enlist in the service those whose social status, mental culture, and material interests in the respective parishes or districts would best ensure the proper dealing with the subjects entrusted to their charge. He believed that very few of the inhabitants of the Metropolis had anything like a clear knowledge of the manner in which the election of the present vestrymen or members of the District Boards was conducted. It was true that notices were placed upon the church doors as to the time appointed for the election of vestrymen; but that, he (Mr. Isaacs) submitted, was not a sufficient advertisement, nor one calculated to awaken anything like a proper amount of interest on the part of those concerned. The result of the present system was that the local government of the Metropolis had fallen into the hands of *cliques* who might be described as almost self-elected, and, in some instances the maladministration of parochial affairs had been so pronounced as to cause the name of vestryman to stink in the nostrils of respectable people. Again, the numbers of those elected to serve as parochial administrators were far too great. From the City of London, with its Lord Mayor, 26 Aldermen, and 206 Common Councillors—total, 232, to govern an area less than a square mile in extent, the Vestries of the larger parishes, with their 120 members, to the District Boards of Works with their members ranging from 36 to 60 in number, all the Governing Bodies were by far too large as regards the number of their members.

It being half an hour after Five of the clock, Further Proceedings on Second Reading stood adjourned.

Further Proceedings *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

PARLIAMENTARY VOTERS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Cremer, Bill to amend the Law relating to the qualification and registration of Parliamentary Voters, and the conduct of Parliamentary Elections, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Cremer, Mr. William Crawford, Mr. Abraham (Glamorgan), Mr. Burt, Mr. Pickard, and Mr. James Rowlands.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 171.]

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Six o'clock,

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 15*th March*, 1888.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*First Reading*—Merchant Shipping (Life Saving Appliances) (43).

Second Reading — Church Discipline (27); Statute Law Revision (35).

Report—Law of Distress Amendment (23-44); Railway and Canal Traffic (41).

Provisional Order Bill—*Second Reading*—Local Government (Ireland) (Bangor and Warrenpoint.)

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.—(No. 27.)

(*The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

The Archbishop of CANTERBURY (Dr. Benson) said, he had to ask their Lordships to give a second reading to this Bill, as one of great importance, and directed to the correction of very great evils. All were agreed that there could be scarcely any worse evil in the Church or the world than an evil clergyman, one who was authorized, commissioned, and set in his place to teach religion and morals, but made himself an example of how to set at nought both religion and morality. Cases appeared from time to time in the newspapers which made all men ask what gain could there be to the cause of Christianity from an exercise of the pastoral office by such a man. On the contrary, there were both grievous injuries to the place where the evils occurred, and they were scarcely less injurious to the Church and to religion at large. But while all felt that they, perhaps, failed to observe or remember how different from one another such cases were, and what defects appeared in the treatment of many of them under existing law, there were other cases which did not appear in the newspapers, but were known to the Bishops, which also caused great scandal. Taking them altogether, they were not numerically very large as compared with the number of the clergy, but they were a very poisonous evil. The cases were very difficult to touch, the processes were very complicated, liable to the most technical objections and very costly, the penalties often futile. This Bill was framed after careful consideration of the defects and difficulties of the present law, and had been thoroughly examined by one Committee after another of those who were most cognizant of the evils and most able to suggest remedies. It was based mainly on the Report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Courts. He would point out where the Bill chiefly departed from that Report, and why. By the present system, under the Church Discipline Act, the process began with the issuing of a Commission to inquire whether there was a *primâ facie* case in any particular instance when complaint was made or scandal existed. Five Commissioners were named by the Bishop for the purpose. But, as a matter of fact, the Bishop himself was often obliged to collect evidence on account of the great unwillingness of the very people who made the complaint to come forward and give evidence. They dreaded the possible expense, and were also very much afraid of their names appearing. The consequence was that the Bishop had to employ persons to get evidence, he had to prosecute, and, after that, he had to be the Judge, for the Commissioners were his nominees, and the case came finally into his own Court. There was another evil of a very grave kind. A clergyman might be convicted in a Criminal Court of drunkenness or theft, indecent assault, or infamous conduct. But though judgment had been passed upon him, still legal proceedings had to be taken against him in an Ecclesiastical Court, and all the particulars had to be gone over again. That was, as a matter of good sense, very unnecessary; it perpetuated and spread the scandal, and added very greatly to the expense. Another great evil was that when the Commissioners had found a *primâ facie* case, it frequently seemed to a Bishop so unadvisable that he should hear a case about which the previous steps had almost compelled him to form an opinion, that it was most commonly sent by Letters of Request to the Provincial Court. The Chancellor, who was the proper Judge, did not, by the Church Discipline Act, sit in the Diocesan Court; the consequence was that the Diocesan Courts were destroyed, and the expenses to all parties were very much increased, because it was necessary in the Provincial Court to employ leading and junior counsel, and the distance which witnesses and others had to be sent added very much to the cost. In the Provincial Court itself, the Bill proposed to replace the Judge in the ancient conditions which had been very recently and disastrously altered. And now, supposing the case, however, to have been carried to an issue, and the offender convicted and sentenced, still there was great difficulty in many cases in enforcing the decrees. A man might be suspended *ab officio* and *a beneficio*, and yet he might refuse to leave the house of residence, then an action of ejectment was probably the only remedy, and then the whole question whether he had been properly suspended would have to be tried over again. But even if it were arranged that he should leave the house, he might then still insist on living in the parish which he had corrupted and scandalized, and all the original evil might be reproduced and intensified. He had seen an instance, in which, when nothing was added to the provision that the man should leave the house of residence, he took a house within the parish, and though an admirable clergyman was put in, who might have restored the parish to peace, harmony, and good feeling, and revived the services of the Church, the subsequent career of the suspended clergyman did almost more evil than before. Again, the man might refuse to give up the church as well as the house, and might carry on the services, which perhaps no one would attend, and there were no certain means of preventing such a scandal. Add to all this that costs were very heavy, and could often be recovered only by sequestration of the benefice. Then the benefice was injured; but more often there was nothing to recover, since necessary outgoings and the provision for duty being carried on exhausted the whole available means. At the best, the only way in which all the expenses could be recovered was by the Bishop securing a conviction. If he failed he had to bear all the expense; while if he succeeded, he had still large sums to pay. Many Bishops had been mulcted in very large amounts; a single clergyman had been described to him as "a constant source of expense to his Bishop," while he was afraid to say how far one Bishop had suffered in that way from one case after another. If the Commission found that there was a *primâ facie* case, the Bishop was compelled to proceed to a trial, on account of the great scandal created, if under such circumstances the man was undisturbed, though he and his advisers were satisfied that he was foredoomed to fail, since they were aware that the evidence on which the Commission had formed their conclusion was not such as would fall within rules of evidence, or, perhaps, be even producible in Court. Another difficulty in the working of the Commission was that the Bishop and all persons concerned were at the mercy of one man. He knew a case himself in which the Commissioners were divided two against two, and the fifth Commissioner, an ununfortunate selection—for all were selected *ad hoc*—said he was persuaded himself that the man was innocent, but that for the satisfaction of all parties the case had better be tried regularly; and tried it was, and lost. Then, under the Pluralities Act, which was one of the methods of proceeding, there was no provision made for expenses, and the Bishop himself was personally liable. The beneficed clergy did not fall very much into the category of those men of whom he had been speaking. In early legislation the cartularies of French Kings contained stringent provisions against "*vagabundi et palabundi episcopi.*" He did not know that there existed at present any class of "roving and wandering Bishops;" but there were too many presbyters who fell under that description. There were few cases comparatively in which they appeared, England, and especially London, drew from all over the world persons who made very brief and unsatisfactory residence in any place, and whom it was almost impossible to trace. They wandered up and down, taking duty for short spaces of time, and committing all sorts of offences. There was wanting some summary process for deposing such men from the ministry, and of getting at those incumbents who, without authority and without inquiry, imposed on by plausible manners and stories, employed them. He had left in the Bill the Court as recommended to be constituted by the Royal Commission, and as he thought it certainly ought to be constituted in most cases—namely, the Chancellor. It was further provided, in accordance with the same recommendations, that if the Bishop deemed the case to be of sufficient importance, it should be tried by the Bishop himself with two or more assessors. The noble and learned Lord opposite (Lord Herschell) had earned the lasting gratitude of a Northern diocese by acting as such assessor. At present the Bishop, with assessors, was by the Church Discipline Bill the sole Judge in the Diocesan Court. It seemed to him, however, that some defendants might reasonably object to be tried by the Chancellor alone, or by the Bishop, from whose previous knowledge of himself he could not hope for much bias in his favour. If exception were taken to the Chancellor's solitary action and to the Bishop's action, it was suggested that the defendant should be allowed to appeal to a Court constituted of the Chancellor and the Commissioners under the Pluralities Act Amendment Act. This liberty would remove the faintest suspicion of bias. The Bill, however, made a slight difference in the Commissioners under that Act. That Act required that two Commissioners should be elected *ad hoc* as each case arose. It seemed desirable, however, for the sake of fairness, that no Commissioner should be elected *ad hoc*, but that they should be elected, like other Commissioners under the Pluralities Act Amendment Act, for a period of three years. One was to be elected by the clergy of the diocese, one by the Chapter of the diocese, and two laymen were to be nominated by the Chairmen of Quarter Sessions. This Bill, then, intrusted all ordinary cases to the Chancellor alone, and he would suggest, by way of amendment, that the Chancellor should be allowed, in cases it was possible for him to attend, to nominate a deputy. By that plan the Bishop would reserve such cases as it was fitting that he should deal with, and the defendant might at his option claim a fuller Court. Such an arrangement would leave little opening for appeals, that fruitful source of expense. This Bill, then—to sum up—sought to simplify two processes of the Ecclesiastical Courts, to save the delays, minimize the expenses, and make the sentence no longer futile. That it would do by accepting the record of Civil Courts, restoring the Chancellor to his functions, providing an experienced tribunal of wider constitution in some cases, obviating objections generally felt as to the recent constitution of the Provincial Court, to diminish costs, partly to lessen the unfairness of Bishops bearing the whole expense of bringing gross offenders to justice, and to make condemnation a reality by delivering the parsonage, the parish church, and the parishioners from the mercies of an immoral or disgracefully neglectful pastor and the baleful influences which surrounded such a man. He had stated the objections to the present condition of the law, and the remedy it was hoped to apply. The sole object which had been kept in view was to correct what in the judgment of all ought to be corrected. He had no doubt there were details which might be amended by the wisdom of their Lordships' House, and no one would be more thankful than he for any improvements. He would ask their Lordships now to read the Bill a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.*)

LORD GRIMTHORPE said, he did not disapprove of the main object of the Bill; but he could not say as much for the manner in which it was to be effected, and he thought it desirable to point out, comprehensively, some of the chief defects in the Bill before trying to amend them in detail by the awkward process by which alone Bills could be amended in a Committee of the Whole House. Besides the general purpose of dealing with what were legally called criminous clerks, if that was really going to be done properly, it was clearly a good thing to enable rules to be made by the Lord Chancellor and other authorities for reforming the practice of the Ecclesiastical Courts, which had been getting more full of technical pitfalls continually, and, above all, by that most unhappy specimen of ecclesiastical legislation—the Public Worship Act. Another good thing in the Bill was that it repealed one portion of that Act—namely, the usurpation of power for the Crown—that was, for the Prime Minister—to approve, and therefore to take if he chose, the appointment of the Dean of Arches, who was now the Judge of both Provinces. It seemed to him absurd, however, to give any Archbishop the power to sever them again, especially as there was no salary left for the Provincial Judge of York, while the Canterbury one had £1,600 a-year. But the Archbishops and Bishops now proposed a much more serious counter - usurpation of their own — that sentence of deprivation of a benefice—which was a purely civil transaction, and might and must be pronounced by any Judge at the Assizes, on a parson who was a second time convicted there of violating the rubrics (and there the Bishop could not protect him by the dispensing power of the veto)—should not be pronounced by the Dean of Arches or Chancellor who really gave the judgment, but the Archbishop or Bishop was to be called in to do it as a sort of executioner. Moreover, that was in flat contradiction to a decision of the Privy Council in "Bonwell *v.* Bishop of London," as to the Dean of Arches, who was clearly proved to have always been the proper person to deprive in the Provincial Court. It was true that the 122nd Canon professed to prohibit anyone but the Bishop from pronouncing deprivations in a Diocesan Court, and it had been assumed to be legal; but never decided or argued; and it had not been observed by those who assumed it, that the Canon was an illegal usurpation by the Convocations of 1603, in direct opposition to the great heresy Act of 13 *Eliz.*, which enacted that the defendant "should be deprived by the Bishop or the Ordinary, and on such sentence he should be indeed deprived." And all the Acts of Uniformity expressly reserved power for the Chancellor to excommunicate and to deprive "in like form as heretofore hath been used by the Queen's ecclesiastical laws." Every lawyer knew that the Canons were invalid against Acts of Parliament, invalid against the laity, and therefore against a lay Chancellor even without those Acts, and that the Queen's Bench had said it would not help them by prohibition. Even the Church Discipline Act of 1840, which was itself an aggression, said that sentence was to be pronounced by the Bishop or his Commissary. Therefore, this clause of the Bill, both for Archbishops and Bishops, was a piece of clerical aggression, and an attempt to introduce the thin end of the High Church wedge, that ecclesiastical jurisdiction proceeded from what they called the Church, by which they meant the clergy, in the face of every legal authority and every Act of Parliament on the subject from the very beginning of the Reformation, and some time before it too. And what was to be done if the Archbishop or Bishop refused to come in and act as executioner under his Judge, and even to defy a *mandamus* and set up as a martyr? Indeed, the Bill was evidently framed with care, so as to enable them to evade a *mandamus* if one should be attempted. And so far was this ecclesiastical usurpation carried, that even the sentence of the Judicial Committee signed by the Queen was no longer to be sufficient, but it was to be sent into the Ecclesiastical Court, for the Bishop or Archbishop to ratify by pronouncing it, if he chose. He would like to know whether the proper guardians of the jurisdiction of the Crown over all persons, ecclesiastical as well as civil, meant to submit to that? And it was a sufficient indication of the spirit of the Bill throughout. The Bill also destroyed the proper legal relations of the Bishops and their Courts in making them both prosecutors, as they always had been legally though not exclusively, and Judges, as they never had been from the Reformation until 1840, except during the two short periods that the Court of High Commission lasted, legally and illegally, which their Lordships knew had twice to be put down by Parliament for its tyranny. Their modern introduction as Judges was entirely effected by a man whose name did not raise a presumption in its favour—namely, Bishop Philpotts, and the singular history of it was worth summing up from the debates of that time. Both in 1838 and 1839 this House passed a Bill, introduced by Lord Chancellor Cottenham, without any such episcopal aggression in it, which was lost by time only in the other House. It was founded, as he said, on the Report of the first Ecclesiastical Commission, which comprised all the principal Bishops and Judges—a very different body from that of 1883 on the Ecclesiastical Courts. That was a very simple Bill, and its main object was to send all ecclesiastical suits at once to the Provincial Court, to be tried there in a more simple way than they were then, or now. Lord Cottenham said that the Bill was approved by most of the Members of that former Commission, and several of them confirmed it, and said that, so far as it differed from their Report, they approved of the change; and, further, he said that it took away no jurisdiction of the Bishops, because they had none to take away, except through their Chancellors, who certainly did not object to lose it, having no exalted Church notions to gratify by retaining it. The Peculiars, of which nearly 300 were also abolished, were Courts quite independent of the Bishops. That Bill gave the Provincial Judge the very useful power of stopping a suit as soon as he perceived that it was frivolous and vexatious. That power was unluckily afterwards transferred to the Bishops, who had notoriously used it for a very different, and, indeed, exactly opposite purpose, and in a manner which had been condemned by some of the highest Judges, even while they were legally deciding in favour of the Bishop, and by a large and weighty minority of the late Commission—namely, to reverse for all practical purposes decisions of the Supreme Court, which had been fought for by both the Church parties at enormous expense, and therefore could not be deemed frivolous or unimportant. It did not seem to have been observed that the veto in the hands of any Bishop with strong leanings either way, as most of them and of the clergy always had, enabled him to make the law of the Church just what he liked throughout his diocese, exactly like the dispensing power usurped by James II. for much the same purpose; and it was being so used continually in some, and probably in most dioceses, for people knew that it was useless to apply for leave to enforce the law. Further, it made every Bishop odious to one party or the other, according as he allowed or forbade prosecutions, as had been amply proved by experience already. Accordingly, in the Bill which he submitted to the Commission of 1883, and which was printed in their evidence, as a substitute for the Church Discipline and the Public Worship Acts, he had copied, in substance, that provision of Lord Cottenham's Bill instead of the episcopal veto. Both in 1838 and 1839 Bishop Philpotts made one of his tremendous onslaughts on that Bill, and called it the most deadly attack that had ever been made upon the Church of England. He easily inflamed the clergy into the same belief, and they furnished him with a lot of Petitions to that effect; but it was singular that they had hardly ever submitted to the power which he ultimately got to try them, and it was practically obsolete. Yet the present Bill revived or extended it. Bishop Philpotts was not so successful in making this House believe him. Even the *mitis sapientia* of Archbishop Howley warmed into indignation, and Bishop Blomfield's more *immitis sapientia* turned upon him as he deserved; and when, at last, after two years' talking, he ventured on a Division, no more than 11 Peers voted with him. After that, he entered an elaborate Protest, which, it was remarkable, did not venture to assert that any Bishop ever sat, or had the right to sit, in his own Court since the Reformation. But then came something still more extraordinary. Although he had been so thoroughly beaten and refuted by the Archbishop and Bishop Blomfield in 1839, he somehow managed afterwards to frighten or cajole them, and through them the Government, into adopting a fundamentally different Bill in 1840, giving the Bishops judicial power for the first time, but not without appeal to the very Provincial Court which he had denounced; and that brought with it a multitude of complications, to provide for preliminary inquiries, and the substitution of one Bishop for another, where the prosecuting and possibly judicial one was also patron; which caused the great *fiasco* of the Archdeacon Denison case after some years and many stages of the suit; and then came the new veto on prosecutions by anybody else. Lord Cottenham said he disclaimed all responsibility for that Act at last, though he would not try to stop it, as the matter had been so long in agitation. Very soon after it was passed, the then Dean of Arches remarked on its badness of drafting, as he mildly put it; and there had been endless confusion and enormous waste of money and abortive suits arising from it. Yet this Bill proceeded on the same lines, and introduced a great deal more complication, and more alternatives of preliminary Courts. The most rev. Prelate had, as it was called, read a first time another Bill about Ecclesiastical Procedure on the same day as this, but it had not yet seen the light—at least, among laymen, though he had received some strong condemnation of it from a Bishop who was not an exalter of clerical jurisdiction; and he took for granted that it did not modify the Bill now before their Lordships, which he must take as he found it, though they ought to have had both together, at least to read and understand. The most rev. Prelate had spoken of the expense of taking criminous clerks to the Provincial Court; but he forgot that exactly those who had caused such expense by fighting every inch of ground hitherto would do just the same again, and take him before his Dean of Arches in the end instead of the beginning, so that he would only have double the expense, and not half, as he might under a proper Act. He (Lord Grimthorpe) himself thoroughly agreed with the views of Lord Penzance in his Report of 1883, and with Bishop Blomfield's last views of the radical unfitness of Bishops to act as Judges. It was true that the Bill gave an option to defendants to pick and chose out of three kinds of Diocesan Courts, or, rather, four—of the Bishop and his Chancellor, each with or without Assessors without judicial votes, and Commissioners with them, of whom three were to be clergymen, and might overrule the proper Judge and his one lay colleague. All that only showed the same clerical aggressiveness as the Report of 1883 did, and a hopeless confusion in the minds of the inventors of all those new alternative tribunals, which somebody must pay for, and which all had to end in the same Provincial Judge. The most rev. Prelate justified the Bill by saying that it was founded on that Report. It was impossible, without notice, to examine how far they agreed, and quite immaterial; for the Bill could hardly have a worse recommendation, considering how all the legal history on which that Report was based had been exposed, for such inaccuracies as were not unnatural, seeing that it had been avowedly entrusted to three Members, not one of whom was a lawyer, and, in fact, ultimately to one, who, however eminent as a historian, in other ways was clearly not qualified for writing a legal history, and showed in nearly every page a strong ecclesiastical bias in one direction always, as the Report itself finally did, whether all the signers of it understood it or not. If their Lordships cared to have proofs of that statement, he would refer them to *The Edinburgh Review* account of the Report, in January, 1884, which seemed to be well known to have been written by a very eminent Member of the Commission, or to a still more detailed examination of the history in Mr. Tomlinson's pamphlet, or to his own Letter to the Archbishop of York upon it; none of which had ever been answered. It should never be forgotten, too, that Archbishop Tait had died before that Report was written, or in any degree settled, as their own Minutes showed; and his questions to the witnesses and his Preface to Brodrick and Fremantle's Privy Council Judgments had all pointed in the opposite direction. The anti-legal bias of the Report was sufficiently shown by its mode of dealing with the Bishop's right to sit judicially, which was treated as all but certain, and as admitted by legal decisions or *dicta*, for which references to law books were given. Those references proved nothing of the kind, and the writer had evidently misunderstood the nature of the Archbishop's visitatorial jurisdiction over Bishops, as was held in the case of Bishop Watson, and ignored an Act of Henry VIII. which had probably preserved it, though the Discipline Act of 1840 was held to have destroyed the punitive visitatorial power over Deans and Canons. Moreover, the Report set out in full a dozen Chancellor's patents, with a paragraph in italics reserving the Bishop's right to sit himself, and one of the very few surviving clerical

Chancellors, himself a Member of the Commission, helped them by saying that Bishops of Chester had sat in modern times; which was all swept away by two interrogative words of the Lord Chief Justice—"*in invitum?*"—to which there was no answer. But that also went for nothing with the Commission and their historian. If the Bishops had reserved the right to burn heretics in their patents, who would have cared or meddled with them, until they had raised the *in invitum* question practically by a sentence for combustion? That was a sufficient specimen of the legal value and the ecclesiastical bias of the Report of that Commission, and he could give plenty more. Last year, when the most rev. Prelate brought forward his Patronage Bill for taking away the rights of the heirs of the founders of all benefices, he dilated on the number of Diocesan Conferences which had approved of it. This Bill specially concerned the clergy, and they did not hear of a single clerical assembly that had approved of it, or even seen it yet, of which he saw that the clergy were complaining. The High Church newspapers, of course, approved it as a whole, on account of those very aggressions on the State jurisdiction, which they were constantly striving to supplant, and to undo the Reformation, as the more candid Ritualists had avowed. Looking at it from the parishioners' point of view, it seemed not to go far enough towards getting rid of the commonest kind of clerical offenders (not that he meant that they were absolutely common)—namely, drunkards, who, it was often complained, were only suspended for a year or two at the most, and then returned as bad as ever. It seemed necessary to give some stronger legislative direction to the Provincial Court on that point. There was a monstrous direction in the Bill that every kind of Civil Court, down to the Justices at Petty Sessions, should send certificates to the Bishop of every verdict or judgment against a clergyman for every kind of act punishable by imprisonment, which practically meant everything for which a trifling fine might be imposed—for which imprisonment was always an alternative—or for a libel, such as giving a discharged servant too bad a character in the opinion of a jury; or writing against employing a dissenting architect to fit up a church; or calling a man a convict after he has returned from penal servitude; or calling tradesmen's lies a fraud, all which things had been so found by juries. And then if the Bishop, in his unlimited discretion, wanted to get rid of him, he might prosecute, and perhaps try him himself; and he was not even to be allowed to prove that he was not guilty but only to "extenuate" his offence; or, on the other hand, however bad he may be in the opinion of his neighbours, the Bishop may protect him and defy them. That was the kind of legislation which the most rev. Prelate told them had been elaborated with so much care by some undisclosed proficients in the art, who had not even taken the trouble to look at the proper titles of the Provincial and the Diocesan Judges of York, either in their patents or in the Public Worship Act. It would be very difficult to amend such a Bill into a proper state in a Committee of the House, and he was not at all sure that he should try, as the Government seemed disposed to let the Bishops deal with these matters as they chose, with such results as they had seen in nearly all their Bills of recent times, which everybody complained of within two years after they were passed. The whole subject wanted thoroughly reviewing in a very different style from this, and in connection with whatever Bill was to deal with ecclesiastical procedure generally.

Lord HERSCHELL said, he could not see that the Bill was a dangerous one, as interfering with any settlement made at the time of the Reformation. The Bill differed in an important respect from those which had preceded it, having the same object in view; and he held that it was extremely wise and expedient to make that difference. A former measure introduced in that House dealt with all classes of ecclesiastical offences, those relating to ritual as well as those against morality. This comprehensiveness led to opposition from various quarters; for many people objected to the proposal to facilitate proceedings for ritual offences, while they approved the proposal to facilitate proceedings to punish offences against morality. There were some who would not be opposed to a measure dealing with the reform of proceedings against a clergyman charged with immorality who would consider it was not the proper function of Parliament to deal with such offences. He thought there would be an agreement between those who belonged to the Church and those who were hostile to it politically, that, in the interests of religion, it was very inexpedient that a clergyman should be guilty of gross immorality and indecency, and yet that there should be difficulty in bringing him to task and inflicting the punishment called for by his offence. As to the best machinery for arriving at those results, there might be room for great differences of opinion, and, as he understood, the most rev. Prelate was open to consider any improvement of the machinery proposed, as the single aim of the Bill was to enable offences against immorality to be more speedily, more cheaply, and more certainly dealt with. Their Lordships, therefore, ought to have no difficulty in giving a second reading to the Bill, some of the provisions of which might be open to amendment in Committee. There ought not to be any difficulty about creating a machinery to try these cases. They were very different from ecclesiastical offences in the broad sense which required ecclesiastical knowledge on the part of those dealing with them. The offences in question were of a kind that everybody was capable of appreciating, and the hearing of a charge required simply the application of common sense to the evidence that was adduced in support of it. As the law now stood, proceedings in respect of an offence against morality must be taken within a certain time of the commission of the offence. A case had happened in which a clergyman lived in adultery, and the fact remained concealed for a time. Proceedings were at last taken in the Divorce Court, and the facts were proved, and a divorce followed; but it was too late for proceedings to be taken in the Ecclesiastical Courts, as the period had elapsed within which it was required they should be commenced; and if it had not been that that clergyman had committed another offence against morality, for which he was tried and received punishment, he must have been permitted to continue in charge of his parish, without any proceedings being taken against him. This Bill would provide an extension of time in such a case by allowing proceedings to be commenced after the offender had been found guilty in a Civil Court. Without committing himself to all the details of the Bill, he should support the second reading on the grounds he had stated.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount CROSS) said, the most rev. Prelate had exercised a wise discretion in confining the Bill to offences against morality, and in not including ecclesiastical offences, which would have to be dealt with in the future. The Bill was brought forward to meet a definite evil—the difficulties experienced by the Bishops in dealing with offences against morality. Surely such a state of things as had been described ought not to be allowed to continue. The details of the Bill might require to be amended in Committee. The Ecclesiastical Commission, of which he was a member, made no attempt to restore a state of things which existed before the Reformation; but they tried to find a solution for a grave state of things in ecclesiastical matters, and to devise some Court for trying both offences against morality and offences against ecclesiastical law. Neither in the minds of the Commissioners nor on the part of the Prelates was there the slightest wish for aggression on the rights of the clergy. The Bill only aimed to provide a proper and effective remedy for cases of immorality which were a scandal to the Church and country, and he hoped their Lordships would agree to the second reading.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2ª accordingly.

LAW OF DISTRESS AMENDMENT BILL.

(*The Lord Herschell.*)

(NO. 44.) REPORT OF AMENDMENTS.

Amendments *reported* (according to Order).

LORD HERSCHELL said, that in pursuance of an undertaking given in Committee to consider the expediency of assimilating the Law of Distress under the Agricultural Holdings Act to this Bill, he proposed to omit Clause 7, relating to the appraisement of goods, and to insert a new clause, which would be applicable both to the present Bill and to the Agricultural Holdings Act. He moved the insertion of a new clause after Clause 4, providing that—

"So much of an Act passed in the second year of the reign of their Majesties King William III. and Mary, chapter 5, as requires appraisement before sale of goods distrained is hereby repealed, except in cases where the tenant or owner of the goods and chattels by writing requires such appraisement to be made, and the landlord or other person levying a distress may sell the goods and chattels distrained without causing them to be previously appraised; and, for the purposes of sale, the goods and chattels distrained shall, at the request in writing of the tenant or owner of such goods and chattels, be removed to a public auction room or to some other fit and proper place specified in such request, and be there sold. The cost and expenses of appraisement, when required by the tenant, shall be borne and paid by him; and the costs and expenses attending any such removal, and any damage to the goods and chattels arising therefrom, shall be borne and paid by the person requesting the removal."

Clause *agreed to*, and *added* to the Bill.

Bill to be read 3ª on *Thursday* next; and to be *printed* as amended. (No. 44.)

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL.

(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

(NO. 35.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that the object of the great bulk of the Bill was to enable the superfluous words "be it enacted that" to be omitted wherever they occurred in the Acts of Parliament reprinted in the first three volumes of the new cheap edition of *The Statutes Revised.* The first volume, which would otherwise have come out at the beginning of the year, had been postponed to enable this and some other small repeals to be made. It was surprising to know that it would lessen the size of the book by 60 pages. It was hoped that there might be no delay in passing so formal a measure through Parliament, so that the production of the cheap edition of the revised statutes might be proceeded with.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2ª accordingly.

RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC BILL.

(*The Lord Stanley of Preston.*)

(NO. 41.) REPORT OF AMENDMENTS.

Amendments *reported* (according to Order).

Clause 80 (Definitions).

Amendment *moved*, to insert, "The term ('merchandize') shall include ('cattle, live stock, and animals of all descriptions')." — (*The Lord Stanley of Preston.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

Bill to be read 3ª *To-morrow.*

MERCHANDIZE MARKS ACT.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

LORD HERSCHELL, in rising to call attention to the working of the Merchandize Marks Act; and to ask What steps have been or are being taken to render the Act effectual in India, the Colonies, and foreign countries? said, he had been led to call attention to this subject because he had been engaged for upwards of a year as Chairman of a Committee sitting at the Board of Trade to inquire into the working of the Trade Marks and Patents Act, and a good deal of information upon the cognate subject of the Merchandize Marks Act had come before him. He did not intend to cast the slightest doubt upon the wisdom or expediency of passing that measure. He thought that some such measure had become absolutely necessary. Acts which in the first instance must undoubtedly have been consciously fraudulent, had come in some cases to be almost usages of trade; and it was very difficult, if not impossible, for anyone, without at least an extraordinary amount of moral fibre, to set himself against the prevailing practice. Marks were put upon manufactured goods which were neither more nor less than false in intention and necessarily deceptive. The evil was a growing one, therefore he did not for a moment doubt that it was both wise and necessary in the interests of honest trade and honest traders to put a stop, as far as possible, to so prejudicial a state of things. There was no doubt that dishonest traders acting in this way injured trade generally. Marks on goods which had won a reputation in particular markets were put on articles of an inferior character, and, for a time, a profit was made by underselling the *bonâ fide* manufacturer, who was sometimes either driven out of the market, or compelled to abandon the mark under which the reputation of his goods had been achieved. So far as the Act had affected these merchants and traders, he believed that its operation had been, upon the whole, extremely beneficial, and, without the necessity of resorting to prosecutions, it had largely checked a practice to which it was desired to put an end. But it had a wider scope than that. While, on the one hand, there were British merchants and manufacturers who adopted questionable practices, they in turn, and, indeed, British merchants and manufacturers generally, suffered from the use of fraudulent marks by foreign manufacturers. Foreign goods of an inferior description were passed off as British goods, and thus injured the sale of British goods and the credit of British manufacturers and merchants. This was a very serious evil, and it was one object of the Act to check the practice as far as possible. Of course, as far as the United Kingdom was concerned, it was possible to make the Act effective by the exercise of vigilance on the part of the Customs authorities, and foreign manufacturers' goods coming into the country had been dealt with to a considerable extent under the Act. But it was obvious that the utmost care ought to be taken not to stop any goods which really ought not to be stopped, because by stopping such goods discredit would be brought on the working of the Act and real damage would be done. There was need of what he might call extra care and precaution in this matter. One case had been brought to his attention where it was alleged that goods ordered by a merchant in Russia from an American manufacturer were not allowed to be landed in this country for the purpose of being trans-shipped to Russia because they were stamped "Stamford Co.," and the mark might be misunderstood for Stamford in Lincolnshire. Our shipping trade might be seriously injured by such action as this. There were other ways of sending goods to Russia than by British steamers and through this country. It was much easier to divert trade than to recall it, and, therefore, it was necessary that great precautions should be taken in the working of the Act. But it was not so much by the importation of such goods into this country that British manufacturers had suffered, as by their importation into India, our Australian Colonies, and foreign countries in the East. What had been the effect up to the present time with regard to this aspect of the question? The Act passed last summer had not come into operation until the 1st of January, 1888. Down to the present time no law had been passed in India which enabled any of these falsely-marked goods to be stopped at the Indian ports. What had happened? Goods which came to this country for trans-shipment to India had been stopped, but these goods were now sent from foreign ports in foreign ships, and got just as readily into India; and the British merchant and manufacturer suffered just as much as formerly, while the British ship-owner was injured. Their Lordships would see, therefore, that unless steps were taken to prevent these goods from being imported into India, and were taken speedily, there was likely to be serious damage to the shipping interest of this country. He thought that our merchants and manufacturers had a right to insist that, while they were brought under these strict regulations, the foreign ship-owner should not be allowed to introduce into India goods that could only be injurious to the Indian consumer and which were a serious disadvantage to the English merchant and manufacturer. In the interests of India there could not be any reason for the slightest delay in passing legislation to give the authorities at the Indian ports power to stop falsely-marked goods. He therefore ventured to put it before their Lordships as a most urgent matter that at the earliest possible date steps should be taken to enable these authorities to do so. He believed that commercial people in India were strongly in favour of such a step, the Bombay Chamber of Commerce having petitioned in favour of it. With regard to the Colonies, there were, no doubt, greater difficulties; they had representative Governments, and their Parliamentary procedure necessarily created a good deal of difficulty which did not exist in the case of India. The remarks, however, which he had made with regard to India applied also to the Colonies; unless steps were taken to enforce this law in the ports of Australia, a serious injury would result to our manufacturing interest which it ought not to be called upon to suffer. There could be no countervailing advantage to the Australians in having these goods introduced into their country.

There might be some difficulty as to their adopting the whole of the Merchandize Marks Act, but without waiting for the complete measure they might be asked to pass the few clauses enabling them to deal with those falsely-marked goods which came from Europe to their ports. That ought not to be a matter of serious difficulty, and would meet the case referred to. Now, he turned to the case of China and Japan. He was told that the matter was somewhat serious there also, and that there were certain German houses, not by any means scrupulous in their dealings, who sent out quantities of goods, some of very good quality, which were stamped as German goods, and some of very inferior quality, which were marked as English goods. The consequence was that not merely did these goods undersell British goods in these markets, but also gave them, as far as they could, a bad reputation in the market, by flooding it with inferior goods. That, of course, was a very serious matter, and one which ought, as far as possible, to be dealt with. Nobody could doubt that during the last few years the strain of competition had become more severe than in former times, although from all he had heard he was not disposed to take the gloomy view which had been taken by some. He believed that we were holding our own as well as could possibly be expected, in spite of competition. Nevertheless, it must be agreed that we could not afford to endure any addition to the difficulty which it was possible to remove and alleviate, if anything could be done to put a stop to such a state of matters as that to which he had referred. It could not be to the interest of China and Japan that they should have their markets flooded with goods which pretended to be something which they were not. Therefore, as far as they were concerned, there could not be any motive for opposition, although, of course, those who were guilty of these practices would wish to continue them. He could not help thinking that as the evil was so serious, and the matter was one in which these countries had no other interest than our own, some steps should be taken, whether by International arrangement or otherwise, to put a stop to the existing state of affairs. He was sure that the importance of the matter would be recognized by all.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount CROSS) said, he entirely agreed with what had fallen from the noble and learned Lord, and thought it extremely important, in the interests of our manufacturers, that these fraudulent practices should be put a stop to as early as possible. A letter on the subject was received at the India Office in June last from the Board of Trade, suggesting legislation. That letter was forwarded to the Government of India, by whom the matter was already being considered, together with copies of the Bill which had been passed in this country. Not having heard what was being done, he had recently sent another despatch to India, and on the 29th of February asked by telegram for a reply. The answer received was that the subject was still under consideration, and a reply would be sent as soon as possible. The matter, therefore, had not been lost sight of. He was aware that there were certain difficulties in the way. In 1879 a Bill had been brought forward by the Viceroy for the purpose of providing for the registration of trade marks. This was done in consequence of the representations of the Chamber of Commerce of Bombay and other mercantile associations. That measure had been referred to a Select Committee, but was withdrawn at the desire of the mercantile bodies. If the answer which he received from India was not satisfactory, he would call attention to the points to which the noble and learned Lord had referred, and probably there would not be much difficulty in passing a law to meet the necessities of the case.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Lord KNUTSFORD) said, he desired to express his entire concurrence in the observations of the noble and learned Lord. He might add that, so far as the Colonies were concerned, the question of merchandize marks was very fully discussed at the Colonial Conference, and he thought that, without exception, all the representatives and delegates from the Colonies were in favour of legislation, something of the kind which now existed in this country. He had sent out a circular at once after that Act had passed to all the Colonies. An Act dealing with the question had been passed by one Colony only—namely, St. Helena—where the question was not very likely to occur. Bills had been introduced by five Colonies—namely, British Guiana, Cyprus, Gibraltar, the Gold Coast, and the Straits Settlements; nine Colonies had promised that such legislation would be introduced; and 19, including Canada, Newfoundland, New South Wales, Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, and Trinidad, had not sent any answer. He had, therefore, sent out a reminding circular, pressing upon them the importance of such legislation. He was afraid that none of the Australian Parliaments were now sitting; but he would take care that all due pressure should be put upon the Colonial Parliaments to pass legislation on the subject.

LORD STANLEY OF PRESTON said, he wished to make a few remarks with regard to the action of the Customs in the matter. The Act in question was extremely difficult to administer. The Customs officers had thrown upon them a very invidious and critical duty in examining the goods coming from abroad and seeing whether the marks upon them contravened the provisions of the Act or not. In the earlier stage there was far from being any feeling on the part of the commercial classes that the Customs exercised any undue rigour. Though the Customs pointed out all the difficulties they had to contend with, the pressure put upon them by the merchants and traders was extreme to make the enforcement of the Act as strict as possible. There was a case in which a large consignment of goods was stopped. The head office of the firm was in London, the depôt in Antwerp, and the manufactory in South America, and though it was claimed that the goods showed the origin required by the Act, it was held that that was not clear, because it was merely stated that the manufactory was in South America and the depôt at Antwerp. There were many cases of that kind, and he believed that, on the whole, the Customs officers had done their duty with great impartiality and ability. As the Act became better known, he was sure it would realize the desires of the trading classes; but if it were to be thoroughly successful it must be stringently applied.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY) said, he had listened with great curiosity to the speech of the noble and learned Lord opposite in order to discover by what machinery he would act in the ports of other countries. He did not know by what authority he would be able to apply to foreign countries to put the machinery of the Act in force. It was not a question of negotiations or of any number of Conventions or Treaties; but what was wanted was the zeal of the Executive acting on the Custom House officers and forcing them to exercise that rigid supervision which alone would satisfy the provisions of the Act. He would invite the noble and learned Lord to exercise his imagination, and suppose that we were to ask China to do what was proposed, and that China was to ask reciprocity of us, what would be the condition of our Custom House officers trying to read the inscription, and to discover whether the consignment of tea came from a particular tea garden? Of course, any practical means of giving effect to what the noble and learned Lord desired to accomplish, the Government would be glad to adopt; but he did not hear anything in the speech of the noble and learned Lord which would lead him to suppose that there was any available machinery at the disposal of the Foreign Office for effecting the object which he had in view.

LORD HERSCHELL said, that his observations applied more to the false marks upon goods alleged to have been sent from this country. The marks upon English and German goods were as well known in China and Japan as in this country, and the Custom House officers would be perfectly competent to see whether they were false or not. He thought the several Governments might be brought to agree to take measures to put a stop to false marks.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—RULES OF DEBATE.—RESOLUTION.

LORD STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL: I shall not detain the House for many minutes. It is unnecessary to point out again in what sense, for what purpose and with a view to what approaching controversy I have ventured to approach the topic of the Standing Orders. As regards this proposal every one knows that according to established usages in both Houses of Parliament a reply is given to the Mover of a Bill or Resolution, in order that he may defend himself and his proposal against the criticisms they have possibly elicited. That object is of course frustrated when, after the reply, new speeches are delivered. The Mover then replies again, and the debate may thus go on for ever. On June 20th, 1884, there was a discussion in this House, and after the noble Earl (the Earl of Rosebery) who brought it on replied, 12 speeches were delivered, the result being that the noble Earl had to reply three times over. It curiously happens that on Monday, 19th, we are going to renew the same discussion under the same auspices. It will not be denied, therefore, that such a Standing Order would be both apposite and practical. Of course, anyone who rises after the reply may now be called to Order; but not so easily as if the regulation can be cited. When the Speaker cannot interfere and no one else is bound to do so, regulation is more necessary. If this Standing Order is adopted some improvement will arise; if it is not, a further argument for salutary change will be created. The noble Lord concluded by moving the Resolution of which he had given Notice.

Moved, as a new Standing Order—

"That where the House permits reply upon a motion or a Bill to the Peer who brought it forward, the debate shall not be continued after the reply is over."—(*The Lord Stratheden and Campbell.*)

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY) said, that no difficulty was experienced under the present system, and he did not think that the new Standing Order proposed by the noble Lord was desirable.

LORD STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL: In the case referred to by the noble Marquess the statement could not, as I understand it, be considered a reply. But I will not divide the House upon this question against the judgment of its Leader.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

PRIVATE BILL LEGISLATION.

MOTION FOR A COMMITTEE.

Message of the House of Commons of Tuesday last on the subject of Private Bill Legislation, *considered* (according to order).

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY), in rising to move—

"That a Committee be appointed, to consist of Six Lords, to join with the Committee of the House of Commons, as mentioned in the said Message, to examine into the present system of Private Bill legislation, and to report how far and in what manner, without prejudice to public interests, that system may be modified with a view to the interests of suitors, the economy of the time of Parliament, and the reduction of costs and charges,"

said, he had heard of a case of a Bill promoted by a Local Board in which there was no opposition, and yet the expense incurred in Private Bill legislation amounted to no less than £1,400. He could not help thinking that the Houses of the Legislature should take some steps to remedy that state of things. There was, he believed, a very strong feeling North of the Tweed that witnesses were often brought up an unnecessary distance and at an unnecessary expense. How far it would be possible to modify the present system and to settle matters of that kind upon the spot he did not know, but, at all events, it was a grievance which it was worth while to consider.

Moved, "That a Committee be appointed, to consist of Six Lords, to join with a Committee of the House of Commons as mentioned in the said Message, to examine into the present system of Private Bill legislation, and to report how far and in what manner, without prejudice to public interests, that system may be modified with a view to the interests of suitors, the economy of the time of Parliament, and the reduction of costs and charges."—(*The Marquess of Salisbury.*)

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY said, that those on his side of the House very heartily concurred in the Motion of the noble Marquess. He thought that on this point they might safely take a step in the direction of Home Rule. He certainly thought it would be far better if local assemblies were left to manage some of the affairs which were now brought to the attention of Parliament, so as to avoid the great expense which was now incurred. He thought such a course would have a very widespread effect. The subject had been over and over again brought before Parliament, though no satisfactory result had been produced. His own feeling was that the present system was far too complicated and tedious and involved very large expenditure indeed. He thought some better and quicker system might very easily be devised, without any injury to Parliament and with advantage to all concerned.

Motion *agreed to:* A message sent to the Commons in answer to their message of Tuesday last to inform them that this House has appointed a Committee to consist of Six Lords to join with the Committee of the House of Commons.

MERCHANT SHIPPING (LIFE SAVING APPLIANCES) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the law with respect to the appliances to be carried by British merchant ships for saving life at sea—Was *presented* by the Earl of Onslow; read 1ª.—(No. 43.)

House adjourned at half-past Six o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 15*th March*, 1888.

MINUTES.] — New Writ Issued — *For* Leicestershire (Melton Division), *v.* The Right honble. John James Robert Manners, G.C.B., commonly called Lord John Manners, now Duke of Rutland, called up to the House of Peers.

New Member Sworn—Lord Walter Charles Gordon Lennox, *for* the County of Sussex (South-Western or Chichester Division).

Select Committees—House of Commons (Admission of Strangers), *appointed;* Army Estimates, *nominated.*

Supply—*considered in Committee*—Navy Estimates; Numbers, Vote I.; Civil Services (on account); Class I.—Public Works and Buildings; Class II.—Salaries and Expenses of Civil Departments; Class III.—Law and Justice; Class IV.—Education, Science, and Art; Class V.—Foreign and Colonial Services; Class VI. — Non-Effective and Charitable Services; Class VII. — Miscellaneous; Revenue Departments.

Public Bills — *Ordered* — *First Reading* — Bail (Scotland) * [172].

First Reading—County Courts Consolidation * [173]; Mortmain and Charitable Uses * [174].

Committee — Timber Acts (Ireland) Amendment * [157]—r.p.

QUESTIONS.

ARMY (ROYAL ARTILLERY)—CASE OF BOMBARDIER ALLAN SMITH.

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he will explain why No. 16,978, Bombardier Allan Smith, No. 3 Battery, 1st Division, Depôt Brigade, Royal Artillery, now residing in Abernethy, Inverness-shire, was discharged, without pension, on the 6th of April, 1866, after serving several years over his first limited engagement; why he did not get the full benefit of the Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief's decision in his case, involving reparation for his imprisonment and other legal wrongs; and whether he will now consent to Smith being supplied, at his own cost, with copies of the documents bearing on his case, but hitherto withheld?

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. Brodrick) (Surrey, Guildford) (who replied) said: Smith, the man referred to, was discharged, in 1866, as a time-expired man after a length of service which did not entitle him to a pension, except a deferred one from the age of 50. This was actually granted to him last year. He did receive such benefit as could be given from the Commander-in-Chief's decision; but he refused to continue in the Service, and claimed promotion which, if he had continued in the Service, he might have obtained. The case was fully considered by Viscount Cardwell, and the Secretary of State is not prepared to re-open it after so many years have elapsed.

SCOTLAND—DISTRICT ROAD BOARD—CLERKS AND TREASURERS.

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether a factor's clerk is qualified to hold the office of clerk or treasurer to a District Road Board in Scotland; whether, in the employment of a Road Board, wages earned by labourers at the making and repairing of roads can be appropriated by the clerk or treasurer in payment of rents and arrears due by labourers to their landlord; and, whether earned wages, intended by the labourer to meet his poor rates and prevent his disfranchisement, and left in the hands of the clerk or treasurer to a Road Board for this object, can be otherwise diverted by such clerk or treasurer?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I cannot undertake to answer purely legal points on a bald and hypothetical statement contained in a Question; and, in any view, must decline to aid hon. Members with professional advice on points of law through the medium of the Question Paper of this House.

INLAND REVENUE—INCOME TAX—WEAR AND TEAR OF MACHINERY.

MR. AINSLIE (Lancashire, N. Lonsdale) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If the Income Tax Commissioners have full power to decide within their own districts what amount of deduction may be made for wear and tear of machinery; if the deductions so allowed vary considerably in different districts, even when under presumably similar circumstances; and whether, if it can be proved to his satisfaction that such inequalities exist, he will consider the propriety of amending the law, so as to enable the General Commissioners of Income Tax to call in an expert in cases where the correctness of their decision in this respect is called in question by an appellant?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The General Commissioners of Income Tax and the Special Commissioners are by law empowered to determine what allowance for "wear and tear" of machinery is "just and reasonable" in determining the amount of Income Tax chargeable on the profits of manufacturing concerns assessed by them, and their decision is final. Statements have been made, from time to time, that the allowances granted in different districts are not identical. Premising that uniformity of practice is desirable, it is not thought that the calling in of a valuer would secure it; inasmuch as it is common knowledge that estimates of value made by different valuers of the same property vary considerably. The Local Commissioners of Taxes, being practical men, may, it is thought, be trusted to exercise fairly their functions in this matter; and it is thought they would not object to examine any valuer tendered by an appellant for examination. Moreover, it is open to any taxpayer to elect to be assessed by the Special Commissioners on giving the required notice, should he prefer to go to them instead of to the Local Commissioners of the district.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—THE RIOTS AT YOUGHAL.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, How much money was expended in drafting in police and military into Youghal on the 7th of March; and, what ground the Authorities had for supposing that it was contemplated to hold a meeting on the anniversary of Hanlon's death?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The expenditure of drafting police and military into Youghal on the 7th of March was under £50. The police had received information that a demonstration and a mock funeral would take place; and the Divisional Magistrate himself had also information on the subject.

MR. DILLON: May I ask the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, whether the police instituted any inquiry from the respectable citizens of the district; and, whether they were not informed that there was no intention to hold any meeting?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: No, Sir. I believe the police made all the inquiries they could; but they certainly would not direct their inquiries to the persons concerned.

MR. DILLON: Is it not a fact that they were told no meeting would take place, or would be attempted to be held?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: The information the police received stated that that was not the fact.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—ELECTION OF GUARDIANS—UNION OF COOTEHILL.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If Mr. Patrick Brady, a candidate for a Division of the Union of

Cootehill, served a notice on the clerk of the Union, requesting him to call upon persons claiming extra votes to produce documentary proof of rental, &c., in support of claims; whether, at a former election, extra votes were allowed to Isabella Johnston and Edward Smith, though their abatements were only temporary; and, whether, at the coming election, Robert Graham, ex-clerk, will be retained by the Local Government Board as Returning Officer, notwithstanding the protests of the majority of the elected Guardians?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The returning officer did receive the notice referred to, and an extra vote was allowed to Isabella Johnston and Edward Smith on their declaration before a Justice of the Peace showing their respective ratings. It is not the fact that Mr. Robert Graham, ex-clerk of the Union, has been retained as Returning Officer.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—COMPENSATION FOR MALICIOUS INJURIES—THE QUEEN'S COUNTY.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he can state the amount voted by the Queen's County Grand Jury for malicious injuries at the Assizes last week; has his attention been drawn to the following account of what took place between the Assize Judge (Mr. Justice Johnson) and the Grand Jury as to 16 alleged "malicious injuries" which the police declared were not "outrages" at all—namely—

> "Colonel Carden, as Chairman of the Committee before whom the applications for malicious injuries came, said he wished to draw his Lordship's attention to the unusually large number of applications for compensation for malicious injuries, arising out of intimidation and Boycotting, which came before the Grand Jury.
>
> "His Lordship said he was informed by the respected County Inspector that the county was not only free from crime of a serious nature, but that it was in its usual state of perfect peace and orderliness, with the exception of one part of the county, where some differences existed between the landlord proprietor and his tenants. During his experience it had been often found that 'malicious' injuries were not malicious at all. The county was now in the same orderly and peaceful state in which he found it on his last visit.
>
> "The Foreman said the 16 cases of malicious injuries did not appear in the Constabulary Report, though they must have been brought under the notice of the police.
>
> "The County Inspector said he could only include those cases which were regarded as outrages at the Constabulary head-quarters;"

can any explanation be afforded and of the disagreement as to what constitutes an "outrage" which exists between the Grand Jurors and the Police; how much of the compensation voted by the Grand Jury for "malicious injuries" covers cases which were not regarded as "outrages" at Constabulary head-quarters; and, could a Return be granted giving particulars of the 16 cases in question?

MR. LALOR (Queen's Co., Leix) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If his attention has been directed to the following report, which appeared in *The Freeman's Journal* of the 9th instant, of a conversation which took place the day previously in Maryborough, between the Grand Jurors of Queen's County and Mr. Justice Johnson, Judge of Assize:—

> "Colonel Carden, as Chairman of Committee for malicious injuries, said he wished to draw his Lordship's attention to the unusually large number of applications for compensation for malicious injuries arising out of intimidation and Boycotting which came before the Grand Jury.
>
> "His Lordship said he was informed by the respected County Inspector that the county was not only free from crime of a serious character, but that it was in its usual state of perfect peace and orderliness, with the exception of one part of the county, where some differences existed between the landlord proprietor and his tenants. During his experience it had been often found that 'malicious' injuries were not malicious at all. The county was now in the same orderly and peaceful state in which he found it on his last visit.
>
> "The Foreman said the 16 cases of malicious injuries did not appear on the Constabulary Report, though they must have been brought under the notice of the police.
>
> "The County Inspector said he could only include those cases which were regarded as outrages at the Constabulary head-quarters;"

and, whether, considering that the present state of things had been so described by Mr. Justice Johnson as existing in Queen's County for the last 18 months, and that there are 25 branches of the National League in the county, he will advise the Lord Lieutenant to withdraw his Proclamation describing the National League in Queen's County as a "dangerous Association," and "formed for the commission of crime?"

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The amount voted by the Queen's County Grand Jury at the recent Spring Assizes for malicious injuries was £256 5*s*. I have seen a newspaper report of the conversation alluded to as having taken place between the Assize Judge (Mr. Justice Johnson) and the Grand Jury as to 16 alleged "malicious injuries," which the police declared were not "outrages" at all. The County Inspector states he is not aware of any disagreement existing between the Grand Jurors and the police as to what constitutes an "outrage;" the point in question being merely a misapprehension on the part of Colonel Carden in supposing that all the cases should appear in the one, the fact being that they appeared in different periods. Of the 16 cases in question, eight had appeared on the Outrage Returns for both the Spring and Summer Assizes of 1887; and of the eight others five appeared on the similar Return for the recent Spring Assizes. The remaining three did not appear in the Return, as they were not recorded as outrages. In these three cases the Grand Jury awarded no compensation. I apprehend the hon. and learned Member can obtain a detailed Return of all these cases from the lists laid before Presentment Sessions. Summarized, the cases are as follow:—One case of cock of hay and outhouse burned; six cases of cocks of hay burned; two cases of cow-houses and cattle burned; four cases of dwelling-houses burned; two cases of injury to animals; and one case of stack of barley burned. The County Inspector reports that since the passing of the recent Statute Boycotting and intimidation have greatly decreased in the county; and the Irish Government can hardly undertake to interfere with the operation of a measure which has been so efficacious in restoring freedom of action by adopting the course suggested.

EGYPT—ARMY OF OCCUPATION (NUMBERS).

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the Secretary of State for War, What number of British troops are now in Egypt; whether any troops, not British, receive British pay, or in any way are chargeable to this country; and, whether he can give an approximate estimate of the cost, inclusive of everything, of the British troops now in Egypt to this country?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. BRODRICK) (Surrey, Guildford) (who replied) said: The British troops in Egypt on the 1st instant numbered 3,395 of all ranks. There are no troops there, who are not British, receiving pay from British Funds. The English officers lent to the Egyptian Army receive pay from Egypt. The estimated gross charge for the British troops in Egypt is £267,409, of which the sum of £110,000 will be repaid by the Egyptian Government, to cover the extra charge involved by their serving in Egypt.

EGYPT—THE EXILES IN CEYLON.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether a Petition has been received from certain of the Egyptian exiles residing in Ceylon, praying that Her Majesty's Government will use its good offices with the Egyptian Government to induce it to allow those gentlemen to return to their native country; and, what action has been taken in the matter?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The Petition in question has been received, and has been communicated to the Government of Egypt. No action has at present been taken in the matter; but it is not probable that the sentence passed will be remitted.

THE MAGISTRACY (ENGLAND AND WALES)—THE ABBEYDORE MAGISTRATES—GEORGE WALKINS.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to a recent trial at the Hereford Assizes, in which Lord Chief Justice Coleridge stated that a farmer named George Walkins had been illegally fined £2 by the Abbeydore Magistrates, and that whoever had got the £2 and did not give it back very quickly would probably find himself in a scrape; and that it was subsequently admitted that the Excise had got this money; and, whether restitution has been ordered?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (MR. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; I have seen a newspaper account of this trial. The whole case has been, I understand, referred for consideration to the Law Officers of the Crown, to whom any further Question on the subject should be addressed.

POST OFFICE—PAY OF PARCEL POSTMEN.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the Postmaster General, Whether, in view of the fact that the parcel postmen in towns are in some cases only paid 16*s.* per week; that this is insufficient to enable them to live and maintain their families decently; that they are not allowed, like the letter carriers, to receive Christmas boxes; that their wage was originally based upon the intention to employ Pensioners and Army Reserve men, who had other means of subsistence; and that only about 10 per cent of parcel postmen are either Pensioners or Army Reserve men, he can see his way to grant them what may be deemed a fair and adequate wage, based upon that which is paid to letter carriers?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): There are comparatively very few towns in which unestablished postmen, giving their whole time to the Office when employed entirely on the delivery and collection of parcels, receive wages of not more than 16*s.* a-week. At the few towns where wages of only 16*s.* a-week are paid, such wages are not below the market value of labour in the district, and they are found sufficient to secure the services of suitable persons. The Department, although it has not prohibited postmen from receiving Christmas boxes from the public, does not by any means wish to encourage the extension of the system. The wages for persons employed on parcel work were not, as the hon. Member suggests, based upon the intention of employing Pensioners and Army Reserve men having other means of subsistence; though, as a matter of fact, in London, where there are about 400 men employed on parcel work, with fixed wages of 18*s.* a-week each, the proportion of Pensioners and Army Reserve men is as much as 25 per cent, four-fifths being Army Reserve men.

LABOURERS' ALLOTMENTS ACT, 1887—NEWPORT PAGNELL BOARD OF GUARDIANS.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether his attention has been called to the following Resolution, passed at a recent meeting of the Board of Guardians at Newport Pagnell:—

> "That, having regard to the applications already made under the Allotments Act, 1887, and after duly considering the same, and finding there would be some difficulty and expense to the ratepayers in carrying out the Act in its entirety, the Rural Sanitary Authority do not in any case apply to the County Authority for compulsory powers under the Act;"

whether a copy of the Circular from the Local Government Board, calling the attention of the Local Authorities to their powers and duties under "The Labourers' Allotments Act, 1887," has been sent to the Newport Pagnell Board of Guardians; and, whether he will, under the circumstances, further impress upon the Guardians the necessity of carrying out the Act?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I understand that a resolution to the effect referred to was passed by a small majority at a recent meeting of the Board of Guardians of the Newport Pagnell Union. A copy of the Circular to which reference is made was sent to the Guardians of that Union. The Guardians are not, in my opinion, justified in passing a resolution that the Rural Sanitary Authority should not in any case apply to the County Authority for compulsory powers under the Act. The Sanitary Authority should clearly consider the circumstances of each particular case, and, according to those circumstances, arrive at their decision. I will inform the Sanitary Authority to this effect.

SCHOOL BOARD (METROPOLIS)—PUNISHMENT FOR NON-ATTENDANCE.

MR. WINTERBOTHAM (Gloucester, Cirencester) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether John Duggan, unemployed labourer, of 13, Sardinia Place, Lincoln's Inn Fields, was, on the 1st of March, sentenced to, and underwent, five days' imprisonment on bread and water, with plank bed, for not sending his boy, aged nine, to St. Mary's School, and whether the reason stated by Duggan to the magistrate, Sir James Ingham, was correct—namely, that the child's absence was caused by the family being foodless, and the boy suffering from a bad ankle; and, whether he was at the time actually under treatment for the same at King's College Hospital (out patient, No. 2235)?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I have received a Report from the magistrate, from which it appears that this man had been four times summoned for neglecting to send his son to school regularly. He had been twice previously convicted. On the occasion in question, I am informed, the attendances of the child had been only 22 in 126. For two weeks during this period the boy was sick, having hurt his ankle. The magistrate took this fact into account; but convicted the man, on the ground that the boy had been persistently irregular before he was sick, and fined him 3*s*. and 2*s*. costs.

NATIONAL DEBT (CONVERSION)—HOLDINGS (NUMBERS).

SIR CHARLES LEWIS (Antrim, N.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, What is the aggregate amount of Consols, Three Per Cent Reduced, and New Threes, held by the several Government Departments which may be converted by the Government under the proposed Government Bill; what is about the total number of separate holdings of private persons and Joint Stock Companies in such three Stocks; what is about the number of separate holdings of such Stocks of not exceeding £1,000; of not exceeding £2,000; of not exceeding £3,000; and, what is about the aggregate amount of such three classes of holdings?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's Hanover Square): The total amount of the three Stocks held by the Government Departments is £68,843,000; but I cannot say that it may all be converted by the Government, as in many cases the consent of other interested parties would be necessary to conversion. The Bank of England does not distinguish—and has no means of distinguishing—between holdings of individuals and of Joint Stock Banks, so I am unable to answer the hon. Baronet's second Question. With reference to his third Question, I am informed that, speaking very roughly, the number of holdings in these Stocks is, of £1,000 and under, 104,500; under £2,000, and over £1,000, 13,000; under £3,000, and over £2,000, 10,500—total, 128,000. The aggregate amount of such holdings is, roughly, £120,000,000, out of £558,000,000, the total amount of the three Stocks.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked, whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer would to-morrow give the House some idea of the quantities of each class of Stock held in Ireland; and whether, in view of the fact that one special class was more generally held in that country than others, it would not be unfairly dealt with?

MR. GOSCHEN said, he could not give the hon. and learned Member the information he wished for; as to the latter part of his Question, the application of principle was general.

BANKRUPTCY COURT (IRELAND)—CASE OF T. MORONEY.

SIR UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH (Lancashire, Clitheroe) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the wife of Thomas Moroney, who has been imprisoned in Kilmainham Gaol since January, 1887, for contempt of Court, has been meanwhile evicted from their home by the Sheriff, acting under the escort of a force of police, and a Resident Magistrate; and, whether, considering the fact that Moroney has now been in prison more than 13 months, any communication will be made to the Bankruptcy Judge who committed him, or any other steps taken to promote the prisoner's release?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I have already said, in reply to a similar Question, that the Executive Government have no power to interfere.

SIR UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: The right hon. and gallant Gentleman has not answered the second part of my Question. As I see the Chief Secretary in his place, may I ask him will he state whether he is prepared to make any communication to the

Bankruptcy Court Judge on the subject of the release of Mr. Moroney?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): We have no power, Sir, to interfere, as my right hon. and gallant Friend has stated.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—CONTEMPT OF COURT—CASE OF JOHN RYAN.

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether John Ryan, an evicted tenant farmer, was committed to Clonmel Gaol for contempt of Court on the 31st of March, 1886; and, whether, he was still in prison in May, 1887?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: John Ryan was not committed to Clonmel Gaol on the 31st of March, 1886, but on the 4th of June, 1886. He was discharged 12 months afterwards. Ryan was imprisoned not for the ordinary offence of taking re-possession of the evicted holding, but for disobeying an order of the Bankruptcy Court.

PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—GREYSTONES HARBOUR—COUNTY WICKLOW.

MR. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If he will state what progress has been made with the works at Greystones Harbour, County Wicklow; how much money has been expended on it up to the present time; what balance is available to complete the work; and whether it is a fact that the place is rapidly filling up, owing to the want of a groin on the north side to stop the travel of the shingle?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I am informed that half of the work has been erected, and that the concrete blocks for the remainder have been made. The amount of contract, including the plant, has been £8,362, out of the total grant of £10,000 made by the Fishery Commissioners. I understand that there has been recently a considerable accumulation of sand and shingle. There has been a proposition to remedy this by the construction of a groin. But that was not recommended by the Fishery Commissioners. It will be a matter for consideration, however, when the authorized works are complete, and if there are funds available. In the meanwhile, the movements of the shingle are being carefully watched and recorded.

PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—HOLYHEAD HARBOUR—THE PLATTERS ROCK.

MR. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether it is proposed to remove the Platters Rock in Holyhead Harbour; if so, what is the estimated cost, and how is it to be met?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.) (who replied) said: In answering this Question, I may as well answer Question 35 also. I am informed that the cost of removing the Platters Rock in Holyhead Harbour is estimated at £250,000. The Board of Trade are not now prepared to recommend such an expenditure.

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES) — HEAVY SENTENCE AT MUMFORD PETTY SESSIONS—S. M. COCK.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been drawn to a sentence at Mumford Petty Sessions, passed on Susan Macrow Cock, a girl aged 12 years, of 10 days' imprisonment in Norwich Gaol, and five years imprisonment in a reformatory, for stealing a piece of meat value 10*d.*; whether this was a first offence; and, whether, under the circumstances, he can advise any mitigation of the sentence?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I have obtained a Report from the magistrates on this case. The facts are as stated. It was a first offence; but the girl was watched and detected in consequence of meat having being missed on previous occasions when she had visited the shop. I think it is a proper case for a reformatory, as the home influences on this girl were not good; and I am not prepared at present to advise any remission of the sentence.

GIBRALTAR—TRADE REGULATIONS.

MR. JACOB BRIGHT (Manchester, S.W.) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, If he will inform the House whether the freedom of trade hitherto enjoyed at Gibraltar is about to be interfered with; and, if so, what are the restrictions intended to be imposed?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): In answer to the hon. Member, I have to state that Her Majesty's Government have no intention of interfering with the freedom of legitimate trade in Gibraltar.

MR. JACOB BRIGHT asked, whether the apprehensions that existed on this question were altogether without foundation?

BARON HENRY DE WORMS repeated that legitimate business would not be interfered with.

MR. JACOB BRIGHT: Will the hon. Gentleman define what he means by legitimate trade?

BARON HENRY DE WORMS: The hon. Member is as well able as I am to define legitimate trade. I will only say that smuggling is not legitimate trade.

SOUTH AFRICA—RAILWAY AT DELAGOA BAY.

MR. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether the Government are aware that a Dutch bid has been made, equal in value to over £40 per £10 share, for the control of the Delagoa Bay Railway, and that nothing but immediate action can save the railway, and with it the key to British trade and commerce in the Transvaal and East Central Africa, from falling into the power of a foreign country?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.) (who replied) said: Her Majesty's Government are not aware of any offer for the purchase of the Delagoa Bay Railway, or of any of the shares in that undertaking; and as to the question of Her Majesty's Government concerning themselves in it, I must refer the hon. Member to my statement on the 5th of March, that it has not been entertained by Her Majesty's Government, because the railway in question does not traverse, and is not intended to enter, British territory.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—SENTENCE ON A NEWSVENDOR.

MR. FIRTH (Dundee) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is true (as stated in *The Star* newspaper of the 10th of March) that on the 2nd of March, at Dingle, in County Kerry, a newsvendor, named Patrick Ferriter, was sentenced to three months' hard labour for selling a copy of *United Ireland* to a policeman named Reddy; whether in order to obtain the paper, the policeman falsely represented his name to be Tynan, and described himself as a Wexford tailor out of work; whether the sale of the paper took place in November, 1887; and, whether the policeman has been promoted or censured?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: Sir, Patrick Ferriter was sentenced at Dingle on the 2nd of March to three months' imprisonment for selling *United Ireland*, containing reports of suppressed branches of the National League. The constable denies that he gave the name of Tynan, but he did represent himself as a tailor. The sale did take place in November last, and the prosecution was instituted soon after; but the case had to be adjourned from time to time. The policeman has not been promoted or censured.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): I wish to ask the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, whether the adjournments from November to the trial were not on every occasion at the instance of the Crown; and, whether at the trial Mr. Ferriter applied for a further adjournment, as his solicitor was engaged at the Assizes at Tralee, and was refused?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: I cannot reply to the first part of the Question of the hon. and learned Gentleman in the affirmative, because twice Ferriter was unable to appear at the Sessions in consequence of undergoing imprisonment for committing assaults on the police. I cannot say, at the present moment, what were the reasons for the other adjournments; but if the hon. and learned

Gentleman will put a Question on the Paper I will answer it.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON: But the right hon. and gallant Gentleman has given his answer on the report in a paper, and cannot he say whether or not this was in the paper?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: I did not give my answer from the report in the paper. I have stated that on two occasions Ferriter was in prison.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON: Well, I will put the Question down.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): This man had three months for selling *United Ireland.* Would it not have been equally an offence if he had refused to sell it, as in the recent case of refusing to sell turf?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: I think that is a matter of opinion. It is hardly a matter for a Question.

CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT — EXAMINATION FOR OUT-PORT CLERKSHIPS.

MR. TUITE (Westmeath, N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, How many out-door officers of Customs who had completed the prescribed three years' service, and whose conduct and abilities had never been questioned, were debarred from the examination held in 1886 for out-port clerkships; and also from the examination held in January, 1888, for Examining Officers of Customs; and, whether the officers in each of the cases referred to were debarred solely in consequence of private Reports made by the collectors, and of which the officers had no intimation whatever; and, if so, will the Board of Customs inform the officers of the nature of the charges made against them, and afford them an opportunity of replying thereto?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I am informed that no single officer was refused permission to compete at either of the examinations mentioned under the circumstances stated in the Question. This being so, it is unnecessary for me to answer the second paragraph of the Question.

INLAND NAVIGATION AND DRAINAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIVER BANN.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If his attention has been called to the Resolutions of the Toome meeting of the 10th ultimo, as to the Bann drainage; and, if he can state when, and how, the Government propose to legislate on the subject?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The attention of the Government has been called to the Resolutions alluded to. They hope to introduce legislation on the subject at the earliest practicable date.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Can the right hon. and gallant Gentleman say whether the proposed legislation will be introduced before Easter?

COLONEL KING HARMAN said, one Bill in connection with the subject would be laid before the House before Easter. He could not say whether or not it would be the Bill relating to the Bann.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) asked the Lord Advocate, If he can now state when the Universities (Scotland) Bill is likely to be introduced?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): Yes, Sir; this Bill will be introduced in "another place" to-morrow, or on Monday.

LOTTERIES ACT—PRIZE DRAWING AT SWORDS, COUNTY DUBLIN.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to a "Grand bazaar and drawing of prizes" to be held at Swords, County Dublin, on Sunday, the 18th of March, for which lottery tickets have been issued; whether the prizes are—

> "A £20 note, the gift of Sir Thomas H. Grattan Esmonde, M.P.; a fat pig; portraits of the Most Rev. Dr. Walsh and Most Rev. Dr. Croke; a fat sheep; portraits of C. S. Parnell and W. E. Gladstone; a box of foreign cigars; portraits of Cardinal Manning and Cardinal Newman; a beautiful meerschaum pipe;"

and other articles; whether the law in Ireland is the same as that in England in reference to such lotteries; and, if so, will he call the attention of the Public Prosecutor to the matter; and, what course it is proposed to be taken with regard to the lottery to be held in Swords next Sunday?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I beg to state that the attention of the Government has been called to the matter referred to in the Question of the hon. Gentleman. The law in Ireland is the same as that in England in reference to such lotteries; and the Irish Government will consult their Law Officers as to the steps that should be taken with regard to bazaars such as that referred to.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby) asked the Secretary of State to the Home Department, whether, in consequence of the answers given to Questions on both sides of the House with regard to lotteries in England, steps had been taken with regard to them; and, whether the reference to the Public Prosecutor really meant anything?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.) said, the reference to the Public Prosecutor meant that the cases would be dealt with as the law directed. He presumed that the Public Prosecutor would exercise his judgment as to the expediency of proceeding or not in particular cases. He believed the rule was that when the Public Prosecutor drew attention to the fact of such lotteries being held, the promoters revoked the drawing, and it proceeded no further.

MR. COBB inquired, whether he was to understand that such lotteries had been stopped, in consequence of the action of the Public Prosecutor?

MR. MATTHEWS: Oh, frequently, Sir. Sometimes the originator of the lottery was unable to return all the subscriptions, because he did not know where to address the subscribers.

POST OFFICE—REDIRECTION OF LETTERS AND POST CARDS.

MR. POMFRET (Kent, Ashford) asked the Postmaster General, Upon what principle letters coming from any foreign country within the Postal Union can be re-directed to any place within the United Kingdom, or to another country within the Union, without any additional charge for postage or registration, whilst every letter, post-card, or postal packet, posted within the United Kingdom, is liable to additional charge for each re-direction—

> "Unless the original and second address be within the delivery of the same post-office, sub-office, or rural walk; and even in that case they are not exempt from a second postage unless the re-direction be made by an officer of the Post Office."

The hon. Gentleman also asked, Whether, as under existing Regulations, the whole of the London District is at present regarded as within the same official delivery for the re-direction of letters, free of charge, whilst in country districts letters, post-cards, and parcels, even when re-directed by Post Office officials to sub-offices and rural walks from the same post town, are liable to second postage, there is any objection to place residents in country districts, having a common post town (many of whom are now suffering from extreme agricultural and trade depression) in an equal position and under similar Regulations as the more wealthy residents within the Metropolitan area?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): As regards the first of the hon. Member's Questions, I should explain that the exemption from charge on letters between countries of the Postal Union was assented to by this country, not willingly, but entirely in deference to the wishes of the majority of the representatives of the countries belonging to the Union. In reply to the second Question, I should state that the London District has, from the first, been looked upon, for purposes of re-direction, as forming one free delivery; but the question of a charge, even in London, has more than once been considered, with the view of doing away with the exceptional arrangement; and, although there is no present intention of making such a change, the point must be considered as reserved only.

IRELAND—REPRODUCTIVE LOAN FUND—COUNTY LEITRIM.

MR. HAYDEN (Leitrim, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What is the amount of the Reproductive Loan Fund to the credit of the County of Leitrim; how many loans have been granted within the last two years; what is their amount; and, what rate of interest is allowed on the portion of the Fund which has not been borrowed?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN)

(Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The balance of cash and stock of this Fund lying to the credit of the County Leitrim at the present date is £1,957. No loans have been granted within the last two years, nor were any recommended during that period. The Fund is invested in Three per Cent. Consols.

BOARD OF NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—MOHILL SCHOOLS.

MR. HAYDEN (Leitrim, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, When advances will be made to the Rev. F. Donohue, P.P., the manager of Mohill Schools, on account of the money expended by him on the faith of grants which the Education Board has been in the habit of making for school buildings, but which the Board has not been yet able to make, owing to the funds placed at their disposal last year for these purposes having become exhausted?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Commissioners of National Education inform me they are unable at present to state when they will be in a position to deal with the application, put forward for the first time on the 5th of this month by the Rev. F. Donohue, for a grant to build a vested school-house to replace the non-vested school-house in which the Mohill Convent National School is conducted, and that they have already communicated with the rev. gentleman to that effect.

MR. HAYDEN: Is it probable the amount will be granted this year?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN said, it was impossible for them to say when it would be granted?

CIVIL SERVICE WRITERS.

SIR WILLIAM PLOWDEN (Wolverhampton, W.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether, in all his dealings with the case of the Civil Service writers, he has ever afforded them an opportunity of being personally heard through their representatives; and, if not, whether, having regard to the constant opportunities enjoyed by Heads of Departments and Treasury Officials of expressing their opinions, he would now consent to receive a representative of the writers?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): The case of the copyists has been dealt with by a Committee of Heads of Departments, and upon their Report a considerable improvement has been effected in the conditions of copyist service. The whole matter will now be laid before the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments. In this state of affairs it does not seem desirable that I should receive a representative of the copyists.

METROPOLITAN POLICE CONSTABLES —ASSAULTS.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, in November last, Messrs. Burn and Berridge, solicitors, of Pancras Lane, City, applied to Sir Charles Warren for information which would assist in the identification of certain policemen who, as they allege, had assaulted their clients; and, whether the information asked for was not given, and a letter was written on behalf of the Chief Commissioner, declining to render any assistance; and, if so, what action he proposes to take in the matter?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Messrs. Burn and Berridge did not apply for the identification of any specified policeman, nor did they name any person as having been assaulted. They made a general application to be furnished with a list of the names and numbers of bodies of police who were on duty at certain points on the 13th of November. Under these circumstances, the Chief Commissioner, acting on the opinion of his legal adviser, did not consider it to be a part of his duty to give the information asked for. I see no reason to take further action in the matter.

EGYPT—A NEW LOAN OF £2,000,000.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether it is true that the Government of Egypt is endeavouring to raise a new loan of £2,000,000; and, if so, for what purpose is this money required?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Her Majesty's Government are informed that the Egyptian Government are desirous of raising a new loan; but the exact amount is still uncertain. The transaction will be economical and prudent. A large portion of the loan is required for the arrangement recently made with the ex-Khedive and his family, and also with other pensioners; as the lands to be ceded in commutation of their yearly allowances are pledged to the Domains Loan, and must be redeemed. The result, however, of this transfer will be a reduced charge on Egyptian Revenues.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.) asked, whether this proposed loan would rate among the Egyptian loans?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: I must ask the right hon. Gentleman to give Notice of the Question.

Mr. DILLON: Would the right hon. Gentleman give the House some assurance that this loan will not be finally contracted before the House has had an opportunity of expressing its opinion upon it?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: No, Sir; I cannot give such an undertaking; it is not to be issued upon the security of Her Majesty's Government.

RIOTS, &c. (IRELAND)—CHARGES AGAINST THE POLICE.

Mr. W. ABRAHAM (Limerick, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he will investigate the charges of stone throwing and window breaking made against Head Constable Stephenson and other policemen, and sworn to by several independent and unimpeached witnesses at a special meeting of the Limerick Town Council, held on the 9th of February, to consider applications for £4 and £10 compensation for windows broken on the 27th November, on the occasion of the suppressed "Manchester Martyrs" Meeting; and, whether his attention has been called to the following question put to Mr. Brady by Mr. Justice Holmes when the case came before him at the Limerick Assizes—

> "Did they (the police) throw the stones deliberately at the hotel windows?"

and to the reply of the witness—

> "They did, my Lord, and at our windows;"

and to the following remarks of Mr. Justice Holmes in dismissing all the applications for compensation, on the ground that they did not come within the meaning of the Act—

> "They had got the evidence of the ladies that the police threw the stones, for what reason it was difficult to understand, but he should take the ladies' statement for it; that was in other words, that men, not 'rioters,' not engaged in a 'tumultuous assembly,' but brought there by their officers, took it into their heads to throw stones and break the windows. The application did not come within the meaning of the Act; the police were not engaged in 'unlawful and riotous' assembly; and for the same reason as in the former cases he should make a like rule and refuse the application."

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, it appeared that a serious riot occurred in Limerick on the occasion referred to in the Question. The police were attacked, and stones, bricks, and hammers thrown at them from housetops and windows. On the 9th of February the Town Council met to consider claims for malicious injury arising out of the riot. The Town Council rejected all the claims except two for windows alleged to have been broken by the police. Only two witnesses swore that they saw Head Constable Stephenson break the windows. The two cases were adjourned before the Judge of Assize. Several witnesses swore that they saw the police break the windows; but the two who had sworn they saw Head Constable Stephenson do it were not produced. The District Inspector reported that the report of the Judge's words set forth in the Question were fairly correct. It was quite possible the District Inspector also reported that stones might have been thrown by the police, as stones were thrown at them from the housetops.

CHARITY COMMISSION—ATTWELL'S CHARITY.

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) asked the hon. Member for Penrith, as a Charity Commissioner, Whether the Charity Commissioners have made a scheme by which the yearly sum of £700 and accumulations amounting to £8,000 belonging to "Attwell's Charity" are to be applied by the Skinners' Company for a Middle School for Girls; whether the will of Laurence Attwell provided that the rents and profits should, from time to time, be employed in some good sort whereby poor people, and especially such as are free of the Company, may be set on work, and yet the stocks kept and remain whole, and increase yearly into the revenues of the said lands; whether he can state what is now the income and what is the amount of the accumulations belonging to "Attwell's Charity;" and, whether the Charity Commissioners will provide for the application of a reasonable part of the Trust income to giving employment to the poor?

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): The first two paragraphs of the hon. Member's Question are correct so far as they go. The original Trusts of the will of Laurence Attwell, however, were displaced in 1828 by a decree of the Court of Chancery, which directed that the income of the Endowment should be applied in loans to young men of good character, beginners in some trade or business, with a preference to members of the Skinners' Company. Since the date of the scheme of the Court of Chancery no part of the Endowment has been applicable in the manner desired by the hon. Member; and the Commissioners have no power by statute, or otherwise, to appropriate loan funds in such manner. From the last accounts furnished to the Commissioners it appears that the property of the Charity consists of real estate, yielding a gross income of £1,083 17*s.* 6*d.*, and of an accumulated sum of £5,745 13*s.* 5*d.* New Three per Cent. Annuities.

NATIONAL DEBT (CONVERSION) BILL —EXPLANATIONS.

Sir CHARLES LEWIS (Antrim, N.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Out of what Fund the bonus of 5*s.* per cent payable under the National Debt (Conversion) Bill to parties assenting to the conversion thereunder of Consols or Reduced Stocks will be paid; and, will it be a charge against Revenue for the forthcoming financial year?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): No, Sir; the bonus will not be a charge against Revenue in the ensuing financial year, as the hon. Baronet will see on referring to Clause 13 of the Bill, which deals with the provision of money to meet this and other expenses incidental to conversion.

Mr. SEALE-HAYNE (Devon, Ashburton) (for Mr. Handel Cossham) (Bristol, E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If he will state, with regard to his scheme for the conversion of the National Debt, whether commission will be paid on ordinary accounts, or only on Trust accounts; and, whether all joint accounts will be assumed to be Trusts, or will a declaration be required to enable an agent to get the commission?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The hon. Member will find that the Bill authorizes the payment of this commission to all recognized agents through whose instrumentality the conversion of Consols or Reduced Threes takes place, and does not limit it to Trust accounts. There will, therefore, be no question of a declaration of a Trust in this connection.

Mr. MACLURE (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, under the Bill for the conversion of the National Debt, provision will be made to protect Trustees who have invested moneys in Consols to cover annuities under wills, or similarly to provide for ground-rents or rent-charges under wills where a distribution of the rest of the property has been legally made?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The hon. Gentleman will, I think, find that Clause 19 of the Bill gives sufficient protection to Trustees in such cases. Every care is being taken to render the position of Trustees secure in the matter.

VACCINATION LAWS—PROSECUTION OF CHARLES HAYWARD, ASHFORD, KENT.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether his attention has been called to the fact that Charles Hayward, of Ashford, Kent, is now being prosecuted for the 60th time since May, 1885, for breach of the Vaccination Laws?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Ritchie) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I am informed by the Guardians of the East Ashford Union that with respect to one of his children Charles Hayward has on 18 occasions had orders made on him by Justices requiring him to cause the child to be vaccinated, and that he has been as many times convicted for not complying with the orders. In respect of another child he has been convicted once for not having it vaccinated within three months of birth; on eight occasions orders of Justices have been made on him for the vaccination of the child, and he has been convicted the same number of times for disobedience. He has thus been convicted in all 27 times.

THAMES PRESERVATION ACT, 1885—STEAM LAUNCHES ON THE THAMES.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether it is the intention of the Board to levy fines upon the owners of steam launches, tugs, &c., who take friends on board (in excess of 12) without payment, or whether the intentions of the Board in regard to this matter are the same as were stated in reply to a Question put to the Parliamentary Secretary of the Board last Session?

THE PRESIDENT (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The position of the matter is the same now as it was on the occasion to which the hon. Member refers.

INDIAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION.

MR. KING (Hull, Central) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether, before any action is taken with regard to the Report of the Indian Public Service Commission, a Parliamentary inquiry will be instituted; and, whether alterations of the extensive character proposed by the Commission will be submitted to Parliament in the form of a Bill?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): It is impossible for the Secretary of State to say what steps will be taken with reference to the Report of the Indian Public Service Commission until he has received the views of the Government of India, by whom the Report is now being considered.

In reply to Mr. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.),

SIR JOHN GORST said, the Report had been laid on the Table of the House, and the question of when it would be printed and circulated lay with the House.

MR. BUCHANAN: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that a full abstract of the Report appeared in *The Times* a few weeks ago?

[No reply.]

POST OFFICE—DELIVERIES IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND.

MR. BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether complaints have reached him that, in the postal districts of Newtownhamilton, Camlough, and Beleek, County Armagh, the English Mails are delivered three hours later than if they were despatched by car from Newry Post Office, and if the Postal Authorities will remedy the matter?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): No, Sir. No such complaints as the hon. Member refers to appear to have been received; but if he will be good enough to put the complaints he has received in writing, I will have inquiries made into the matter.

MARRIAGES (ROMAN CATHOLIC) AT VICTORIA DOCKS—THE REGISTRAR.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether complaints have reached him that marriages in Roman Catholic churches in the neighbourhood of Victoria Docks have frequently had to be postponed, owing to the non-arrival of the Registrar, Mr. Frederick Mulley, Leytonstone Union, Stratford, E?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I have not received any complaints in the matter referred to in the Question, and the Registrar General informs me that no such complaints have reached him. Leytonstone is in the West Ham Union and Registration District. There is no registration officer in that district named Frederick Mulley. Mr. John Mulley is the Deputy Superintendent Registrar; but the Registrar General states that he is never required to be present officially at marriages in Roman Catholic churches.

WEST SURREY WATERWORKS COMPANY'S BILL.

MR. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether he is aware that the West Surrey Waterworks Company are asking for power to acquire several acres of land on the Thames at Halliford, for the purpose of constructing buildings and filter beds, for which they are unfitted, in consequence of such land being frequently flooded; whether part of such works include a wharf or landing stage extending six feet into the channel of the River at its narrowest part, which will materially interfere with the flow of the River; and, whether he will take any steps to oblige the Conservators of the Thames to do their duty and oppose such Bill in Committee, as the riparian owners, who will be injured, have no *locus standi* to do so, and as the Conservators are, from their Parliamentary powers, the guardians of the stream?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The West Surrey Waterworks Company are promoting a Bill in Parliament, under which it is proposed to acquire several acres of land adjoining the Thames in the parish of Walton, for the purpose of constructing buildings and reservoirs. The Conservators, however, inform me that it does not appear, either from the Bill or the deposited plans, that the Company propose to erect a wharf or landing-stage extending six feet into the channel of the River at its narrowest part. The Conservators, I am informed, have taken all necessary steps by petitioning Parliament against the Bill; and on Tuesday last, when a Committee of this House had the Bill under consideration, the Conservators appeared by counsel, and on the representations made by them the Committee inserted clauses in the Bill to protect the public interests. Among these provisions is one that no works affecting the Thames shall be constructed until the plans, &c., of such works have been approved by the Conservators.

ADMIRALTY—WIDOWS OF RETIRED NAVIGATING OFFICERS.

CAPTAIN PRICE (Devonport) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, If he will lay upon the Table of the House, a Copy of any Regulations and Orders in Council affecting the pensions granted to the widows of retired navigating officers on the Superannuated List from 1861 till 1886; whether any diminution was made in the amount of these pensions; and, by whose authority or recommendation was it made; and for what reason?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): There have been no Regulations in regard to pensions of widows of navigating officers beyond those contained in the Orders in Council dated 28th February, 1855, 22nd February, 1860, 26th June, 1867, and 22nd February, 1870. No diminution has been made in the pensions sanctioned by these Orders in Council to widows of retired navigating officers, though it is the case that previous to 1880 an erroneous calculation of the time of certain officers, and which it proved could not be borne out by the terms of the Orders in Council, led to their widows being awarded a higher scale of pension than they were legally entitled to, and for the payment and legislation of which a special Order in Council had to be obtained. This Order in Council only governed past cases, and did not establish a prospective claim.

CHARITY COMMISSIONERS—ENDOWED SCHOOLS — DISTRIBUTION AND NUMBERS.

SIR RICHARD PAGET (Somerset, Wells) asked the hon. Member for Penrith, as a Charity Commissioner, If the Commissioners will be good enough to cause a skeleton map of England and Wales to be prepared, showing the position of the various Endowed Schools and their respective grades; and, in presenting it to the House, if he will furnish at the same time a Return, arranged by Counties, showing the accommodation for and present numbers of Boarders and Day Boys or Girls at each School, and the total charge for Boarders and Day Pupils at each School; if he will add to the Return the present estimated Population of each County; and, if he will supplement the above, so far as he is able, by a similar Return, by Counties, showing the provision which has been made by private adventure for Intermediate or Middle Class Schools?

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): The Charity Commissioners fully recognize that a map showing the position of the various Endowed Schools would be of considerable advantage to the public, as it would show the present state and further requirements of secondary education in England and Wales so far as endowments are concerned; but they are quite unable, with their present staff and resources, to undertake such a work without stopping the current work of the Endowed Schools Department of the Office; and, for the same reason, they are unable to furnish a Return in the form desired by the hon. Baronet. The Charity Commissioners have no general knowledge of, and no means of obtaining, any accurate information about the provisions made by private adventure for Intermediate or Middle Class Schools. We can, however, give the hon. Baronet a Return, by Counties, of the Endowments hitherto ascertained to be subject to the Endowed Schools Acts, showing whether those Endowments are or are not regulated by schemes established under those Acts, and, if so regulated, whether they are for boys or for girls, and the grades of the schools so established. Perhaps the hon. Baronet will move for the Return in continuation of Endowed Schools Acts Return No. 29, House of Lords, 1883, and there will be no objection to granting it, so far as the Charity Commission is concerned.

LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANIES—LEGISLATION.

SIR WILLIAM HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.) asked the President of the Board of Trade, When the Government propose to introduce the Bill for remedying abuses in the formation of Companies under Limited Liability, referred to in the Queen's Speech?

THE PRESIDENT (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.), in reply, said, it was proposed that the Bill should be introduced in the House of Lords by the Lord Chancellor; but the date must depend on the progress of other Business.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACTS—LEGISLATION.

SIR WILLIAM HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether it is the intention of the Government, this Session, to bring in a Bill to amend the law relating to Weights and Measures, as recommended by the Standard Department of the Board of Trade, which was promised by the Government last year?

THE PRESIDENT (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.): The question of further legislation in connection with the Weights and Measures Act is receiving the careful attention of the Board of Trade; and if the state of Public Business will admit, I hope to introduce, this Session, an amending Bill.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—REDUCTION OF SUB-COMMISSIONERS.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If he can explain why, in the Estimates for the Irish Land Commission for the period from the 1st of April to the 22nd of August, 1888, a reduction of three legal Sub-Commissioners and 12 non-legal Sub-Commissioners is shown under the number for last year, whereas the land cases to be heard have increased by 50,000; and, was this reduction made on the recommendation of the Land Commission; and, if not, who is responsible for it?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): As a matter of fact, the numbers of Sub-Commissioners actually appointed during the present financial year have never reached the figure contemplated in the Supplementary Estimates of last summer, which were necessarily more or less conjectural. The greatest number of Sub-Commissioners in existence this year is 50, which is the present number. Provision has been made for 65 Sub-Commissioners next year, being an increase of 15 over the numbers now engaged. This provision was personally settled between the Land Commissioners and myself in December last, to cover the number which at that time it was hoped would be sufficient, but on the distinct understanding that if the requirements of the service should prove to be larger the necessary sanction would be given; and, as a fact, this has been done, the sanctioned numbers being now raised to 80.

MR. T. M. HEALY: There were 80 in the Estimates last year; and my point is, how is it this year there is an estimated number of only 65, and how are you going to provide the salary of 80 when you estimate for only 65?

MR. JACKSON: As I have already explained, the Supplementary Estimates of last summer were necessarily very conjectural as to the number of Sub-Commissioners required, and provision was made for a larger number; but, as a matter of fact, the number was not appointed, and the number in existence is 50. That number was increased, after the consultation I had with the Land Commissioners, to 65, as the number, it was thought, which would prove to be sufficient for the work next year; but, as I have said, on the distinct understanding if it proved insufficient the number would be increased to meet the necessary work, and that number was subsequently increased, because two months after it was found the work had increased, and application was made by the Commissioners and sanction given, the sanctioned number of Sub-Commissioners now being 80.

EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY BILL.

MR. BURT (Morpeth) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If he can state when the Employers' Liability Bill will be in the hands of Members?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I cannot state the time exactly; but it will be in the hands of Members very shortly.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): Will it be before Easter?

MR. MATTHEWS: Certainly.

CEYLON—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick, &c.) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether he is prepared to recommend the extension of the railway from Nannoya to Haputale, in the Island of Ceylon; whether he is aware that in answer to a Question on this subject, put to his Predecessor in Office on the 12th of May, 1887, he replied, that—

> "The extension could not be undertaken by Government in the present financial condition of the Colony, but that a Private Company would be at liberty to take it up;"

and, whether, should the Government still be indisposed to proceed with the construction of the proposed extension, he will permit a Private Company to proceed with it, or to construct an alternative line to tap the traffic of the Uva district?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Governor of the Colony has recently been informed that the Secretary of State is now satisfied that the proposed extension may be undertaken by the Colonial Government. Consequently no question arises as to the formation of a Private Company.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—MARGARINE ACT—REDUCTION OF FINES.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) (for Mr. MURPHY, Dublin, St. Patrick's) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What were the names of the two persons whose fines of £10 each for offences against the Margarine Act were reduced to £2 each by the Lord Lieutenant on Memorial; what was the date on which the original fines were imposed by the police magistrate; and, if any other Memorials have been received by the Lord Lieutenant, praying to reduce fines under the same Act?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, the names of the two persons referred to were Bartholomew Magee and Bridget O'Gorman. They were convicted on February 15. Three other Memorials had since been received by the Lord Lieutenant, praying that the fines which had been imposed upon them under the same Act might also be reduced, and those Memorials were now under consideration.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Would the right hon. and gallant Gentleman have any objection to inform the Lord Lieutenant that all these parties have the right of appeal to the Recorder of Dublin?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: In all probability the Lord Lieutenant is perfectly aware of that.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I also wished to ask, as the only remaining industry in the three Southern Provinces of Ireland is the making of butter, why the Lord Lieutenant has reduced the fines so justly imposed by the magistrates from £10 to £2 without even giving them the opportunity of appealing?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): When did the three other convictions occur, and who were the magistrates?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: In the first two cases, as I explained a few days ago, the Lord Lieutenant took into consideration the fact that they were the first cases which had occurred under the Act. They occurred almost immediately after the Act came into operation, and the Lord Lieutenant considered that some clemency might be exercised with regard to them. The three later cases to which I have referred were dealt with by the magistrates on March 2, and of course those offenders had more time to know what they were about and had also time to hear of the previous convictions. I cannot possibly say what effect their appeal to the Lord Lieutenant will have, but I should say that probably that circumstance would be taken into consideration. Mr. Woodlock was the presiding magistrate in each case.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Is the right hon. and gallant Gentlemen aware that on the day after the proclamation of the County Clare, my hon. Friend the Member for the Eastern Division of County Clare (Mr. Cox) was for a speech then delivered subsequently arrested and sentenced to four months' imprisonment; and may I ask if the Lord Lieutenant's attention was directed to that case under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act; and if the Lord Lieutenant will inquire into that case and consider whether it is not a fit one to show his clemency, as the alleged offence was committed immediately after?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. T. M. HEALY: As the alleged offence was committed after——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! Mr. Pickersgill.

"THE SWEATING SYSTEM"—THE LORDS' COMMITTEE.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether it is intended that the proceedings of the Committee of the House of Lords, to inquire into the "Sweating System," shall be open to the public.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) (Bristol, W.): I understand that the Committee have decided to admit the public to hear the evidence taken before them.

SCOTLAND—THE POLICE AT ROGART, SUTHERLANDSHIRE.

Mr. A. SUTHERLAND (Sutherland) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether his attention has been called to a report in *The Highland News* of 3rd instant of an indignation meeting of the inhabitants of Rogart, Sutherlandshire, held in the Free Church there to protest against the action of the Police Commissioners in stationing a police constable in the district; whether it is the fact, as stated at the meeting, that there has been no police constable resident in the district for the last 70 years; whether he can state what are the circumstances in Rogart calling for this action of the authorities at the present time, who is intended to be benefited thereby, and who is to bear the additional expense?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I was not aware of the facts stated in the Question, but assume them to be correct. I must decline to answer Questions such as those contained in the last paragraph, which relates entirely to local matters of detail.

CIVIL SERVICE COPYISTS.

Mr. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether he adheres to his statement that the three copyists whose promotion to the Lower Division has been suspended—namely, Messrs. W. H. Brattle, R. F. Franklin, and T. Knighton—mis-stated their ages; and, if so, whether he is aware that the gentlemen in question state that they have never made any such mis-statement; and, whether, therefore, as the matter affects their honour and integrity, he will give them an opportunity to prove their assertion?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): I am much obliged to the hon. Member for putting this Question, because I have referred to my answer to the hon. Member's former Question, and I think it is open to misconstruction. I never intended to say that the copyists in question had mis-stated their age, nor did I say so. A Rule was laid down for the Sub-Committee, which dealt with the individual cases of copyists recommended for promotion, that those who were within the age for competition for the Lower Division in the ordinary way were not eligible for special promotion; and in recommending these men it must be obvious that there was mis-statement or mistake as to their age and eligibility; but I am far from imputing intentional mis-statement to anyone.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked, whether the hon. Gentleman had made himself acquainted with the nature of the work which Brattle had for eight years been engaged in?

Mr. JACKSON: I think the hon. Gentleman will see that it would not be possible—and that, if possible, it would be very unwise—for the Secretary to the Treasury to examine personally the work of individuals in the Departments. That matter has been referred to a Committee of the Department to deal with. Although I am most anxious to answer any Question upon any subject relating to my Department, I feel that these continued Questions with reference to individuals and their work is creating very great difficulty in the Civil Service. I hope that I shall not be understood in any way to shrink from giving the fullest and most complete information; but hon. Members must see how difficult it is for the Heads of Departments to carry on their respective Departments if individual grievances are to be made the subject of Questions in the House.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Will the Secretary to the Treasury take steps to ascertain from the Heads of the Department if a certain man, who was employed at 10*d*. an hour, has for the last eight years been engaged on confidential work, relating to the advance of the Russians in Central Asia, and to important State secrets, which the Press, if they had been able to bribe him, would have been glad to get hold of?

Mr. JACKSON: I think, after what I have said, I must adhere to the position I have taken up, that it would be exceedingly improper, if not impossible, to examine into individual cases.

GOLD AND SILVER—HALL MARKING OF FOREIGN WATCHES.

Mr. YERBURGH (Chester) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether in the paragraph in the Memorandum accompanying the Report of the Committee on the Hall Marking of Foreign Watch Cases, to the effect that while in the assay offices—

> "In London, Birmingham, and Sheffield, accurate balances and modern appliances have been adopted, in other offices less accurate and even primitive methods of treatment have been retained,"

the phrase "other offices" is intended to include the Chester Assay Office; and, whether the Members of the Committee who visited the Chester Assay Office on the 14th of October last expressed themselves as entirely satisfied with the accuracy of the balances and the correctness of the appliances used therein?

The PRESIDENT (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) (Bristol, W.): The paragraph refers to all the offices, including Chester, and the Committee, when at Chester, expressed no such opinion as the hon. Member refers to. Had they done so, it would have been beyond the scope of the inquiry.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA—MR. G. W. LEAKE, POLICE MAGISTRATE OF PERTH.

Mr. DEASY (Mayo, W.) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether George Walpole Leake, Police Magistrate in Perth, Western Australia, who has been lately appointed Acting Justice by Governor Broom during the suspension of Chief Justice Onslow, was convicted in Perth and fined £10 for having used a defaced postage stamp; whether he was committed for contempt of Court in the same town; whether he is the same George Walpole Leake who, while acting as Attorney General, assaulted an attorney named Burt by hurling at him a large pewter ink bottle during a trial in the Supreme Court; and, whether the Colonial Office Regulation, No. 75, has been departed from in appointing him?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): I have made inquiry, and find that there is no record in the Colonial Office of the circumstances referred to. The hon. Member does not state whether the transactions which he alleges to have occurred were of distant or recent date; but whatever foundation there may be for the statements which have reached him, it is clear that successive Governors have held a high opinion of Mr. Leake's character and ability, as he has since 1857 been on many occasions appointed to act as Crown Solicitor, Police Magistrate, Attorney General, and Public Prosecutor; and he now holds the responsible post of Police Magistrate of Perth, the capital of the Colony. His appointment to act temporarily as Chief Justice has involved no departure from the 75th Colonial Regulation, which relates to permanent appointment.

THE BOUNDARIES COMMISSION—THE REPORT.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether, having regard to the Report of the Secretary to the Boundaries Commission, dated 2nd January, 1888, which states that at that date only one-fourth of the work had been done, and that the work of the Commission would probably not be completed till "about the end of July," he will take steps to obtain from the Commission a Preliminary Report, stating definitely the principles on which the Commission have decided to adjust overlapping boundaries of unions; and, whether he will arrange that such Preliminary Report shall be in the hands of Members of this House before the Easter Recess?

MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye) asked, Whether the statement, on page 517 of the Civil Service Estimates, that the work of the Local Government Boundary Commission will be completed about the end of July, is to be taken to indicate that the Report will be issued at that time; and, whether it will be possible to afford to Members an earlier opportunity of becoming acquainted with the general results of the inquiry?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): It does not devolve on the Commissioners to adjust the boundaries; but to make such recommendations as they deem desirable with regard to such adjustment. As regards the Question as to the principles on which the Commissioners will act, I should presume that in each case when the facts have been ascertained the decision of the Boundary Commissioners would be according to the circumstances of the particular case. I will communicate with the Commissioners as to whether it is their intention to submit any Preliminary Report.

In answer to a further Question,

MR. RITCHIE said, I hope on Monday next to be able to explain to the House the principles on which the boundaries will be drawn. The House may be satisfied that no re-adjustment of boundaries will be determined upon without the House having full opportunity of considering each case.

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES) — THE DEVON QUARTER SESSIONS—CASE OF HENRY HART.

SIR JOHN KENNAWAY (Devon, Honiton) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he can now state the decision at which he has arrived in regard to the case of Henry Hart, sentenced at the Devon Quarter Sessions held in February, to two months' imprisonment, with hard labour, for stealing coal, the property of his employer, with respect to which sentence a largely signed Petition has been forwarded to the Home Office by residents in the locality, asking on various grounds for a remission of a portion of the sentence?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I have carefully considered the case of Hart, sentenced at Devon Sessions, and I regret that I am unable to advise any interference with the sentence, which appears to have been most carefully considered by the magistrates in consultation upon all the circumstances of the case.

LOTTERIES ACT—THE "BLACKBURN EVENING EXPRESS."

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked Mr. Attorney General, Whether he has observed that *The Blackburn Evening Express* (Primrose edition) offers to give away £10 in prizes each week to those who during the week have become possessors of the seven copies of that journal, and will send to its office the coupon printed in each copy; and, whether this is an infringement of the law against lotteries?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): I have considered the advertisement in the paper which the hon. Member has been good enough to send me; and, in my opinion, the scheme therein proposed does infringe the law against lotteries.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Will the hon. and learned Gentleman take action in the matter?

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: It is not for me to take action; but I will take care that the attention of the proper authorities is called to the matter.

IRELAND—THE LORD LIEUTENANT AND CHIEF SECRETARY.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the Government will lay upon the Table a Return giving the dates on which the Lord Lieutenant was absent from, and on which the Chief Secretary was present in, Ireland during the year 1887?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): No, Sir.

CIVIL SERVANTS—POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS—MR. GEOFFREY BROWNING, MR. FOTTRELL.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) had the following Question on the Paper: To ask the First Lord of the Treasury, If the "Geoffrey Browning," who signed the address to the right hon. Members for St. George's, Hanover Square, and Rossendale for the recent Unionist demonstration in Dublin is the gentleman who receives £1,000 as Solicitor to the Irish Land Commission; and, if Mr. B. Leech, author of a pamphlet against Home Rule, price 3*d*., is paid a similar salary as Examiner on Title to the Irish Land Purchase Commission? The hon. and learned Gentleman said, that before he asked the Question which stood in his name, he wished to state that as he wrote the Question it would read—"To ask the First Lord of the Treasury, If the Geoffrey Browning, who signed the address to Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen for the recent Tory demonstration in Dublin, etc." For the word "Tory" the word "Unionist" had been substituted. He wished to know whether the word Tory was an un-Parliamentary word?

[No reply.]

MR. T. M. HEALY then asked the Question.

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I will endeavour to answer the hon. and learned Gentleman without referring to the word "Tory." Mr. Geoffrey Browning, who signed the address to the Marquess of Hartington and Mr. Goschen, is the Solicitor to the Irish Land Commission, and receives £1,000 a-year. Mr. Leech also receives the same salary as Examiner on Title to the Irish Land Purchase Commission, and is the author of a pamphlet entitled *The Continuity of the Irish Revolutionary Movement*. Questions somewhat similar to these have several times been put to me relative to other members of the Civil Service; and it may be as well that I should state the position of the Treasury in regard to the general question as to how far permanent Civil servants are at liberty to take part in politics. There is, I am informed, no written Rule extending to the whole Service on the subject; but the existence of an unwritten but operative law is proved by the rarity of the charges of partizanship brought against Civil servants. Speaking generally, the Rule is as I have before stated—namely, that permanent members of the Civil Service of all grades are to avoid taking any public or prominent part in politics; as it is only under these conditions that satisfactory relations between Ministers and Civil Service Departments, and with the public at large, are possible. Her Majesty's Government—and, I think, all previous Governments—have desired to give to Civil servants, within the bounds I have indicated, the fullest possible freedom as to the exercise of their political opinions; but if complaints that such freedom had been abused became frequent, it would be the duty of the Government to consider what Regulations were necessary for the protection of the interests of the general body of the Civil Service. In certain Departments the Heads have already laid down Rules on the subject; but these Rules are not general to the Service, and Her Majesty's Government rely on the good sense of the permanent Civil Service to make the issue of Regulations unnecessary. I am informed by the Irish Land Commissioners that they have always disapproved of any of their officials taking part in any political manifestation. In the above cases, and also in that of another gentleman, and who subscribed to the fund for Mr. Wilfrid Blunt's defence, the Commissioners conveyed their disapproval to those gentlemen when the matter was first brought under their notice some two months ago: I may add that, having had very considerable experience of the Civil Service, and having had as my Private Secretary, in my first Office of Secretary to the Treasury, a gentleman of opposite politics to my own, and who served me most loyally and faithfully, but who subsequently became Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, and who now holds a high office in the Civil Service, I wish to bear my testimony generally to the great discretion exercised by those gentlemen in the discharge of their duty both as Civil servants and citizens. I should deeply regret if it were necessary to impose any restriction upon them, because I think, generally speaking, it is not necessary or deserved. I trust, therefore, that the assurance of the Government that Civil servants will be discouraged from taking any active part, by way of public speaking, in politics will be sufficient to prevent the issue of any Regulation upon the subject.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Will the prohibition extend to the Inspector of Irish Fisheries, who made a speech in the General Synod of the Church of Ireland?

[No reply.]

Mr. T. M. HEALY: As to the statement with reference to the Examiner on Title to the Irish Land Purchase Commissioner, Mr. Brougham Leech, who wrote a pamphlet on the continuity of the Irish Hottentot movement, or whatever it was, is the right hon. Gentleman prepared to say whether that pamphlet will, after the remark he has made, be withdrawn from circulation?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: No, Sir. I am not prepared to add anything to what I have already stated. The hon. and learned Gentleman is aware that in times past many eminent members of the Civil Service have used their pens to forward views which they advocated as private citizens. I have in my mind specially one gentleman—Sir Thomas Farrer—who scarcely allowed a month to pass without taking part in political controversies in periodicals. No objection has ever been taken, nor has any President of the Board of Trade, though opposed to him in politics, had occasion to find fault with Sir Thomas Farrer in the course he pursued. I think I have said enough to show that the Government will discourage partizanship on the part of Civil servants, and it must be left to the Heads of Departments to determine at present whether that partizanship is unfair or not.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): With reference to this Question, may I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether his attention has been directed to the fact that occurred in the same Department, that Mr. George Fottrell was dismissed by his Predecessors in the Irish Office because he expressed a slight opinion in favour of a certain provision of the Land Act; and is he, on the face of that precedent, going to dismiss one man because he expresses an opinion on one side, and retain another man because he has expressed very much greater partizanship on the other side?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I have no knowledge of the circumstances under which Mr. George Fottrell was dismissed.

Mr. DILLON: Will the right hon. Gentleman cause inquiry, because this is a matter of considerable importance? I will ask the Chief Secretary will he cause inquiry into the matter, so that the Irish people may not be led to believe that a man who had displayed partizanship in favour of the Unionist Party would escape censure, while a man who expressed an opinion on the other side would be dismissed from his office?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: If the hon. Member will put a Question on the Paper for Monday, I shall be ready to answer him.

Mr. DILLON: I will do so.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: There is a Blue Book on the subject issued in 1881.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Is there any objection to issue a Rule for the whole of the Civil Service, applying not only to the Heads of Departments but also to the lower officials?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I object to answer a Question affecting a large number of loyal servants of the Crown without Notice.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I shall ask the Question to-morrow.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE WAR OFFICE AND ADMIRALTY — THE ROYAL COMMISSION.

Lord CHARLES BERESFORD (Marylebone, E.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, When he will nominate the Royal Commission which the Government have promised, to inquire into the system of administration at the War Office and Admiralty; and, if he will give the names of those who are to serve on it, and state the earliest date on which it is expected the Commission will meet?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster), in reply, said, the noble and gallant Lord would see that the importance of the Commission was very great, and therefore the Government must exercise considerable care in the selection of the gentlemen who were to be nominated. He was unable to say when the Commission would be nominated; but no time would be lost in coming to a decision upon the matter.

INDENTURED APPRENTICESHIPS.

MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he will instruct the Labour Bureau to prepare, for the information of the House and the country, a Return of the number of skilled artizans and mechanics engaged in the leading industries of the country who have acquired a knowledge of their various crafts by means of indentured apprenticeships?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.) (who replied) said: It would be impossible accurately to ascertain the number of workmen who have been trained under indentures, without a special Census of all the artizans and mechanics in the United Kingdom, which the Labour Bureau has no statutory powers of enforcing. I am informed that the system of indentured apprenticeships has for many years been gradually falling into disuse, although it is still, to a very limited extent, in existence.

MR. CREMER said, the Labour Bureau was in touch with organized bodies of working men, and he thought the information might be obtained by means of such organizations.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH said, that was a very much smaller question than was implied in the one in print. He thought the number of artizans with whom the Labour Bureau was in communication amounted to not more than 140,000. Of course, the statistics relating to so small a number would be comparatively of very little value. He would communicate with Mr. Burnett on the subject.

METROPOLIS LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL.

MR. ISAACS (Newington, Walworth) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether Her Majesty's Government are prepared to afford facilities for discussing the Metropolis Local Government Bill, or for dealing with the subject?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster), in reply, said, that he greatly regretted that the hon. Member had been unable to secure time on the previous day for the discussion of the Metropolis Local Government Bill; but he would perceive from the state of Public Business that the Government were unable to afford facilities for the discussion of a subject which was of such importance that it required to be taken up by the Government of the day. He hoped to be able in a short time to state the views of Her Majesty's present Government upon the matter.

POST OFFICE—THE DELAY IN THE FRENCH MAIL SERVICE.

In reply to Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) and Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith),

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University) said: Before the hon. Members' Questions reached me I had already set on foot inquiries as to what remedy could be found for the temporary inconvenience caused by the block on the French Railway. I understand that prompt steps are being taken to remove that block, and that the normal mail service with France may be expected to be resumed very soon. But should the obstruction unfortunately continue, the Post Office is devising with the contractors for the Channel Service means for preventing, as far as possible, delays in the mail service.

SITTINGS AND ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE—THE EASTER RECESS.

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): Can the First Lord of the Treasury inform the House on what day, and for how long, the House will adjourn for the Easter holidays?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): It is not in my power positively to inform the House when I shall be able to ask it to rise for the Easter holidays; but I hope, if the course of Business should permit, that we may adjourn after a Morning Sitting on Tuesday, the 27th instant, until, I think, the Thursday in the following week.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—SECTION 30.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland a Question of which he had given private Notice, Whether he could lay on the Table of the House, before the discussion on the arrears question next Wednesday, any further information as to the working of the 30th section of the Land Act of last Session, especially as regards the way in which arrears had been dealt with by the County Court Judges?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): Yes, Sir; that is a subject upon which I am endeavouring to collect information. As the hon. Gentleman is probably aware, it rests with the clerks of the Court to supply it, and I cannot get it direct from my own officials; therefore, I cannot insure having all the information which I desire to lay before the House; but I have received information with regard to certain counties, and that, together with any other information that I am able to lay before the House, I shall be glad to produce.

PRIVILEGE—THE NATIONAL RADICAL UNION.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick, &c.): I beg to claim the indulgence of the House whilst I bring before it what seems to be a Breach of the Privileges of this House. A few days ago the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) brought forward an Amendment in Committee of Supply to reduce the amount required for Special Missions. A certain number of hon. Members of this House went into the Lobby and voted with the hon. Member in favour of that reduction. The result of that has been that an Association calling itself the National Radical Union has sent a letter to the constituents of those hon. Members who voted with the hon. Member for Northampton, and it is in this letter, Sir, that I think the Breach of Privilege lies. That, Sir, is a question which you will be able to decide. I will read the letter, and then, with the permission of the House, make a few remarks upon it. It is issued from Birmingham, and is as follows:—

> "National Radical Union, Corporation
> "Street, Birmingham,
> "March 5, 1888.
>
> "Dear Sir,—I desire to impress upon you the importance of making the most in your columns of the fact that Mr. Peter Esslemont, M.P., supported Mr. Labouchere and Mr. T. P. O'Connor in their unpatriotic and mean attempt to mar the international amity between two kindred nations by refusing to grant the unusually small Vote for defraying the expense of Mr. Chamberlain's Mission to the United States."—

Now, Sir, the sting of the letter lies in the tail—

> "This will tell very much against Gladstonian Secessionists if well worked in your columns."

I am very sorry to say that a similar letter has been sent to my constituency, and I ask whether you do not consider this a Breach of the Privileges of this House?

[No reply.]

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON: I beg to move that this letter is a Breach of the Privileges of this House.

MR. SPEAKER: It seems to me that there is not even a *primâ facie* case of Privilege.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Main Question [12th March], "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Question again proposed.

Debate *resumed.*

ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM OF THE ADMIRALTY.—RESOLUTION.

[ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) said, that the remarks he was addressing to the House were stopped by the clock on Monday. He did not, however, propose to trespass at any length upon the further indulgence of the House; he was quite sensible of the kindness which he had already received. He was endeavouring when interrupted in his argument to press on the Government the importance of widening the scope of their inquiry into the system of organization of the Army and Navy, and he was attempting to show how it might be included in the ordinary way in a Report on the naval defence of the Empire; its sufficiency and efficiency. In support of that argument he had ventured to quote from the proceedings of the Colonial Conference, and he had read an extract from a letter written by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), in September, 1884, in which the case was very powerfully put. He (Admiral Field) came now to a second branch of the subject in reference to which he had placed a formal Motion on the Paper, but which, he understood, the Forms of the House would not allow to be put; but before doing so he desired to refer to the want of dock accommodation in Bombay—a question which he had brought before the House in 1886, and again last year, having been struck by the fact that it had been necessary to send from India a flagship in order that she might be repaired at Malta. He looked at it as a public scandal to the Indian Empire, which this country had to guard, that we should not have dock accommodation for a first-class iron-clad at Bombay. Last year they were told that a dock was to be made, and he believed that Estimates had been furnished to the Government which showed that some £80,000 or £100,000 were all that was required to provide the necessary accommodation; but the Indian and Imperial Government had been fighting with each other as to which was to pay the cost. They were told now that the dock was to be made, and he should like to hear from the Admiralty what progress had been made in providing the necessary accommodation. He now came to the second branch of the subject—namely, the Admiralty Administration. The attention of the House and of the whole country had been called to that subject in connection with the resignation of the noble and gallant Lord the Member for East Marylebone (Lord Charles Beresford). He had no right to speak for the noble and gallant Lord, who made an admirable speech the other day; but it was not difficult for naval men to read and look into the motives of the noble and gallant Lord's resignation. They were highly honourable to the noble and gallant Lord himself; but he (Admiral Field) was satisfied that the resignation was not sent in simply on the question of the salaries of the officers of the Intelligence Department. He thought the reasons for it were much deeper and wider and more subtle, and he asked the attention of the House while he ventured to explain the views which naval men took of this important question of naval administration. He thought the Orders in Council, which were alluded to in the Motion standing in his name, were at the root of the whole matter. They found no great complaints made about the administration of the Admiralty up to the year 1869; but ever since 1869 there had been continual complaints. As a matter of fact, responsible and distinguished men were appointed to the Admiralty on account of their real ability, and yet they had virtually no power whatever. He did not propose to weary the House by reflecting on the course pursued by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), who was the first Minister of the Crown to introduce a great change; but it was necessary to refer to the constitution of the Board of Admiralty. The Admiralty was one of the oldest institutions in the country, and it ought to be respected on account of its antiquity. The Office of Lord High Admiral was an ancient one; it was vested in the Crown; but it was a power which could be, and had been, delegated from time to time. On a few occasions nominees of the Crown had been called Lord High Admiral; but in the Reign of William and Mary the House of Commons—jealous of the power of the Lord High Admiral—desired that it should be put in Commission, and the Act then passed had remained on the Statute Book up to the present time. The noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) had led the House to believe that naval men were now going in for what was called "supremacy" at the Board. That was altogether wrong; no such feeling existed on the part of naval men. All they wished was that the Naval Members of the Board should have real power and responsibility as defined by Act of Parliament. They were Commissioners co-equal by law, but by the usage of centuries that co-equal power had ceased to exist. He maintained that their rights still exist by law, and that they ought not to be ignored by the Ministers of the Crown. The Orders in Council from 1869 and 1872 down to 1882 were all unnecessary and *ultra vires;* therefore they were illegal and ought to be withdrawn. He had discussed the question with eminent lawyers, and they all went with him in maintaining that nothing could alter the Act of Parliament, and that no Order in Council could take away from or add to the power which was conferred by Act of Parliament. He therefore maintained that these Orders in Council ought never to have been issued, and that they ought to be withdrawn. It was not that naval men had any notion of calling in question the supremacy of the First Lord. The First Lords of the Admiralty had always worked harmoniously with their Colleagues, and, on their part, no naval men he had ever heard of had disputed or sought in any way to undermine or interfere with the authority or with the supremacy of the First Lord, who must be a Cabinet Minister, and it was simply trailing a red herring across the scent to pretend that naval men had any such idea. No doubt, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh thought all he did was right. What was wanted was strong men at the head of the Admiralty; but in regard to the right hon. Gentleman he could not help thinking that, although he proved himself politically strong, he was a very self-willed man. He hoped they might never meet with as strong a man again, but the experience and training of the right hon. Gentleman had been obtained in the Colonies, where no respect was entertained for traditions. Naval men believed that that fact accounted for the exercise of the supreme will of the right hon. Gentleman in having these Orders in Council issued. He would quote for the benefit of the right hon. Gentleman the opinion of the Legal Adviser of the Admiralty of that time, Mr. Bristow, in examination by the Chairman of the Committee of the House of Lords which inquired into the subject. Mr. Bristow —the Solicitor to the Admiralty—was asked by the Duke of Somerset—

> "Is it not the fact that the Order in Council of 1869 is not only at variance with the Patent issued subsequently, but it is also at variance with the Common Law, upon which the usage of the Admiralty rests?—I am inclined to think that it is."

Mr. Bristow also said that subsequent Patents would annul the Order in Council. It amounted to this—that the Orders in Council, although thus annulled, had been acted on as if legal; and it was only in the House of Commons that the question could be raised, and the legality of these Orders in Council properly tested. It was difficult to expect a Minister, when he succeeded to the position of First Lord of the Admiralty, and found an Order in Council in existence which gave him supremacy, and converted his Council into mere subordinates, would get rid of that Order. He had shown that the Orders in Council were illegal; that the Naval Lords were not responsible to the First Lord; but that they were responsible under an Act of Parliament to the Board, the First Lord being responsible to the House. He, therefore, contended that the Orders in Council were unnecessary; that they were a burning grievance in the eyes of naval men; and that they ought to be withdrawn. In 1873 the late Lord Beaconsfield delivered a speech in Glasgow at a time when the Navy were smarting from the rule of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh. Lord Beaconsfield said—

> "Ask the Naval Profession whether they have not been worried. During the course of the present Government, the whole administrative system of the Admiralty, the Council which had always great influence in the management of the Navy, and the peculiar office of the Secretary were all swept away; and in spite I may say, of the nightly warnings of a right hon. Friend, who is now lost to us all and his country, the ablest Minister of the Admiralty during the present reign—notwithstanding his nightly warnings that they were so conducting the administration of the Navy that they would probably fall into some disaster, his remonstrances were in vain, till soon the most costly vessel of the State, the *Captain*, was lost, and the perilous voyage of the *Megœra* had been made, when the country would stand it no longer. They rescinded the whole of this worrying arrangement, and appointed a new First Lord to re-establish the whole system."

Lord Beaconsfield was wrong. He thought it had been done, but it was not done. Lord Beaconsfield was a high authority in favour of the naval view, and surely when a man of such eminence spoke in that sense it was a condemnation of the system, and the system itself ought to be modified out of respect for the high authority which condemned it. The right hon. Gentleman the present Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) succeeded the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh as First Lord of the Admiralty, and modified the Order in Council by striking out the most hateful part of it. The right hon. Gentleman made the Naval Lords Heads of Departments, but still left them responsible to the First Lord. That was his point. His contention was that they ought to get rid of the Orders in Council. Naval men had always respected the First Lord of the Admiralty, and had always submitted to his veto on all points submitted to the Board, in consideration for the position he occupied; but they maintained that the First Lord had no right to abolish the Board. Of course, he could do anything with a majority at his back, and that was why the Orders in Council had been carried out. He could quote argument after argument in support of his view. It was held by the Duke of Somerset, by Sir James Graham, and by other eminent Ministers who were examined before the Committees of 1861 and 1871. There was no difference of opinion among them. Sir James Graham and the Duke of Somerset both agreed that the First Lord must be supreme, and they both laid down clearly that it was the duty of each Naval Lord to support the decisions of the First Lord. Naval men appealed to the Front Bench as the exponents and guardians *par excellence* of Conservative principles, and one of the cherished Conservative principles was a respect for the law as long as it was the law. They said that it was their duty to see that the law was respected so long as it was on the Statute Book. It ought to be respected, and so long as a Minister, whether the First Lord of the Admiralty or any other Minister, was responsible, the law ought to be respected without issuing Orders in Council, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh did, in an evil moment, his example having been followed, unfortunately, ever since. His view was that they ought to transact the business of the Board of Admiralty with a full sense of the authority of every Member of the Board, while acknowledging the supremacy of the First Lord. The Duke of Somerset, in the Report of the Committee of 1871, said—

> "The Committee have failed to discover the advantage of fixing the precise duties of the several Lords by 'Order in Council.' A Minute of the Board would have facilitated some re-adjustment of the business according to the special qualifications of the Lords or ever-varying demands of the Public Service. The Order in Council, 1869, has so far disabled the Board that it is no longer fitted for consultations or for the review of naval affairs. The ancient Patent of Admiralty, qualified by long usage, had established an equality of the Lords for the purpose of suggestion and consultation, combined with the absolute supremacy of the First Lord for the purposes of action."

The naval men accepted that definition. They were perfectly loyal to the supremacy of the First Lord, and the principle he contended for; but they maintained that the Naval Board should meet as it had done for centuries, although, by the usage of centuries, the supremacy of the First Lord must be acknowledged. The Duke of Somerset goes on to say—

> "The Board of Admiralty was constituted to bring around him—the First Lord—men of high standing and long experience in the Navy. The maintenance of the Navy in a state of continued preparation and efficiency depends on innumerable details, which neither the examination of the Estimates nor the vigilance of Parliament can secure. The First Lord can only be acquainted with such matters through daily intercourse and friendly communication with officers of the Navy. It is, therefore, of primary importance that the Naval Service should be adequately represented in the Department which regulates naval officers."

Naval men accepted that view also, and all they asked was that the First Lord should accept it. They were only fighting for what the law laid down. Some persons who had discussed the question, had not taken the trouble to study and read the evidence of the Duke of Somerset and Sir James Graham before these two Committees. If they would only read the evidence he was sure they would come to the conclusion that the Act of Parliament ought to be upheld. It might be said by some that if the system was as he had represented it, it ought to be altered; but he maintained that those who took that view were trifling with an Act of Parliament, and were not the proper guardians of the Service. Sir James Graham was examined in reference to the Patent, and he said—

> "I have made it my study to make myself master of the origin of power exercised by the First Lord at the Board, the constitution of the Board, its power, and its legal origin; the more I have investigated the matter the more I am satisfied that, like the Common Law in aid of the Statute Law, the power exercised by the Board of Admiralty and the different members of it rests more upon usage than upon the Patents—uninterrupted usage from a very early period; and, my conviction being such as I have stated, I am led to view with increased apprehension any great change that will supersede that usage and prescription. I am of opinion that there would be great danger in attempting to touch the Patent. I infinitely prefer, therefore, on the whole, the maintenance of existing Patents, in concurrence with the established usage of centuries."

At the present moment the Board of Admiralty were guardians of the foreshore above low water mark of all the creeks and islets round the coast, and possessed rights in regard to derelict ships, &c. There were, therefore, numerous questions which could not possibly be dealt with in an amended Act, and no lawyer would be rash enough to meddle with the Act of Parliament, or the Patent, because one portion of the Act was unsatisfactory. If the Act and the Patents were to be interfered with, it would be necessary to come back to the rights of the Crown, where all power still resided. Under these circumstances, all persons were agreed that the Act could not be meddled with or the Patents altered without danger, but that what had been the custom for centuries should continue to prevail, and that the naval responsibility of the Admiralty should be made real and effective by sweeping away Orders in Council. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in a speech delivered in that House, had pointed out that the Naval Members of the Board should have responsibility. They ought, however, as they were conversant with the Naval Profession, to be made more responsible, occupying the position which was laid down for them in the Act of Parliament, which made them responsible not only to the First Lord, but to the country. In 1872 the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) said—

> "Allusion has been made to frequent changes in the person of the First Lord, and consequent want of experience of the special duties with which he was charged. That was rather an argument in favour of than against a Board, because, if the First Lord was without special knowledge, he must look for high professional advice, and ascertain what were the opinions of the Profession. The Service liked to know that side by side with a responsible Minister there were others quite conversant with the details of the Profession, and who would give advice under a sense of responsibility."

Lord Brassey also stated, in a speech delivered in that House in 1872—

> "There is a tendency to neglect the efficiency of the Service, and to regard economy in Naval Administration exhibited in too many instances by the Board of Admiralty. Another error was making the Department depend too exclusively upon the First Lord, which was the more objectionable on account of the frequent changes which our Parliamentary system involved, and under such a plan it was impossible that our affairs could prosper."

He would give a case in order to show how valuable the powers of the Board were, and how necessary it was to retain those powers intact. Sir James Graham cited a remarkable and historical case to show how elastic the powers of the Board were to meet great and unforeseen emergencies which no single Minister could do. Mr. Croker was ordered by the Board to go with Lord Castlereagh to Paris as Foreign Minister—after Waterloo—to confer with the Duke of Wellington. Mr. Croker was told to act on orders from the Foreign Minister in Paris, and consequently wrote to Sir H. Hotham on the Coast of France to intercept Napoleon and bring him to England, which was done in the *Bellerophon*. Now, that could not have been done in any other manner than by the Board of Admiralty, acting, as they did, through their organ the Secretary. The most objectionable form of administration was attempted in 1828 under the Duke of Clarence, who was Lord High Admiral, but the system utterly broke down. The Duke of Wellington had to abolish it and to revive the old Board. Under these circumstances, he asked the First Lord to have some respect for the sentiments of the Navy, and to be prepared to meet the wishes of naval men. According to Sir George Willes, the Admiralty as a Court of Appeal had ceased to exist. Then, again, the Naval Secretary had been abolished, much to the regret of the Naval Service. The noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty, in his speech the other day, made use of some observations to which exception must be taken. Speaking at Ealing the noble Lord said—

> "I re-arranged the business (the Naval Lords) the Executive Heads of their Departments, and I endeavoured to be accessible to them whenever they wanted to see me, and I established the practice of allowing any individual Member of the Board to record a protest against action collectively taken of which he disapproved, but which was not of such importance as to justify his retiring from office. Under no other form of administration will the Navy be as much governed by naval men. The Naval Lords are my Colleagues and not assistants—they act as my primary and not as secondary advisers. I believe it to be for the interests of the Navy that this system should continue, but it would become at once unworkable and impossible if the supreme authority of the Civil Head is circumvented, undermined, or overthrown."

There was no desire on the part of any naval man to circumvent, undermine, or overthrow the supreme authority of the Civil Head of the Board, and they were prepared to repudiate the charge. Their contention was that if the Orders in Council were abolished the authority of the Naval Board under the Statute would revive, and they asked that the Naval Lords should be invited to record their opinions and present a Report simultaneously with the Memorandum of the First Lord. The late Secretary for War had inaugurated that system by directing his chief officer to present a Report to the House. The Naval Lords of the Admiralty should make a similar Report in reference to their respective branches, and all such Reports should be laid before the House. Hitherto First Lords of the Admiralty had "burked" naval opinion, and only gave what happened to suit them. If the country had known what the state of the Service was at the time of the Russian scare considerable alarm would have been felt. He admitted that the Government had done their best now to remove the defects which existed then. A former First Lord of the Admiralty told Parliament in 1884 that he would not know what to do with £3,000,000 sterling extra; a very short time afterwards he came to Parliament to ask for a grant of £5,000,000. What naval men wanted was that Parliament and the country should know what our defects were, and that Parliament should insist upon a remedy being applied. Hitherto the Admiralty had kept back what it pleased, and only told the House what they deemed proper, no doubt with the object of making the Estimates popular. In 1844 Sir William Bowles wrote a letter to Lord Haddington, the then First Lord of the Admiralty, on the defenceless condition of the country so far as naval preparations were concerned. He said that at that time there was an actual conspiracy among certain French officers to seize the British Fleet in the Mediterranean. Sir Cooper Key only last month wrote these words—

> "I also concur in Lord Charles Beresford's view, that disaster must result if the unanimous opinion of the Naval Members of the Board is overruled. I have never known this to be the case."

What was absolutely necessary was that the opinion of Naval Lords should be made known, and not overruled, as it was overruled, in the Council Chamber. Surely the country only wanted to know the truth. Very often if the truth were known a great deal of unnecessary expense would be saved. Sir George Elliott, in a letter to *The Times* the other day, suggested—

> "That a printed Report of the opinions of the Naval Lords be laid before Parliament with the Estimates, so that the country may no longer be kept in ignorance of the real state of the Navy and the danger of an unprepared state for war. The position of the First Lord will be greatly strengthened in the Cabinet when his Estimates are accompanied by the independent Reports of the Naval Lords, and when the Chancellor of the Exchequer knows they will be laid before Parliament."

Sir Spencer Robinson, who was for many years at the Admiralty as Controller, said also in a letter to *The Times* in 1885—

> "If each head of a Division of Admiralty work were, as I have often advocated, obliged to make an Annual Report to be laid on the Table of the House of Commons with the Navy Estimates, the responsibility of each head of the separate Divisions of the Admiralty would be distinctly engaged before the public. An epitome of what these Reports should contain will be found in the Annual Report of the Secretary to the Navy annually laid before the Congress of the United States. I cannot ask for space to go into details on this subject, but it is evident that, were they made a portion of the Navy Estimates and submitted to Parliament, no Cabinet Minister could suppress a truthful statement of the condition of the Navy, or shelter himself behind the character, experience, and professional ability of his Chief Nval Adviser, compelled by etiquette and complete irresponsibility, whatever may be his opinions, to heart-breaking silence."

In other words, every naval man worth listening to held these views. He did not care how it was done so long as it was done, or whether it was done by the First Lord of the Admiralty making a statement to the House or by issuing a printed document. What they ought to insist upon was that the naval opinion on the state of the Navy should be made known, and not "burked" as it was now. He agreed with the noble and gallant Lord the Member for East Marylebone as to the importance of increasing the number of the Executive officials at the Board of Admiralty. It was very well known that the Controller's Department was very much overworked at the present moment. Why, then, should he not be granted a Deputy Controller? Then, again, the First Naval Lord was immensely overworked. Why not grant him extra naval assistance? The First Lord implied that if this assistance were provided, the officers would soon wish to go to sea; but his (Admiral Field's) experience of the Service convinced him that there was plenty of naval ability at hand, and that many excellent officers who were now on the retired list would be willing to serve in a confidential manner, under a naval superior, to the great advantage of the State. The present system was one which could never work well, and he asked the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty to assist naval men in reforming it. In the first place he asked for the withdrawal of the Orders in Council which were a burning grievance, and for the restoration of the Naval Board as it formerly existed. There never would be any desire on the part of naval men to dispute the authority of the First Lord who must be responsible to Parliament. He was convinced that all would work harmoniously if his suggestions were carried out.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): The hon. and gallant Member has repeated almost word for word the speech which he delivered last year.

Admiral FIELD: Not a bit; not 10 lines of it.

Mr. CHILDERS: I am afraid that he has given us more, at any rate he has favoured us with a *réchauffé* of what he said the other day. Now, I feel very reluctant to repeat what I said in reply to the hon. and gallant Member last year, and I am, therefore, desirous of compressing my remarks into the very smallest compass. The hon. and gallant Admiral seems to be entirely ignorant of what took place in this House, and elsewhere, before the changes effected under the Order in Council of 1869. There had been endless debates in this House on the question of Admiralty organization. There had been a Royal Commission upon it, which had reported precisely in the sense of the Order in Council. There had also been a Committee of this House which took a very large amount of evidence on the subject and made no Report at all; and there had been in the year 1867-8, when Mr. Corry presided at the Admiralty, a Committee of this House which sat during the whole of the Session. I was a Member of it, and I drafted and carried the Report. That Committee heard a great deal of evidence, and, so far as the Controllers' Department was concerned, questions of Admiralty organization were fully gone into. When, therefore, the hon. and gallant Admiral says that there was no complaint about Admiralty organization before 1869, all I can say is that at the time the hon. and gallant Member was a Commander afloat, and, no doubt, the question did not come under his notice; but those who were then and for 10 years before Members of the House had to discuss the question over and over again, and used to hear complaints from month to month and year to year. I had the responsibility of drawing up the Report of the Select Committee of 1868; and when I was entrusted with the responsibility, as First Lord, of setting this long controversy about in the Admiralty organization, I considered it absolutely necessary to put into effect what appeared to me to be the view of Parliament, and the Order in Council was the result of the duty thus imposed upon me. Perhaps I may be allowed to explain to the hon. and gallant Admiral and to the House what the question of responsibility was which had been brought before a Royal Commission, two Select Committees, and had to be settled by the Board of Admiralty in 1868. The hon. and gallant Admiral is entirely mistaken in thinking that any new arrangements were brought in force by the Order in Council which were not entirely concurred in by the Board of Admiralty which then took office. They had the question fully under their consideration, and they fully accepted the terms of the Order. I will give the hon. and gallant Admiral, in as few words as possible, the reason why that Order in Council was passed. It had nothing to do with the paramount powers of the First Lord of the Admiralty. No question had ever arisen in anyone's mind, except possibly in that of Sir George Seymour, that the First Lord, as a Cabinet Minister, had absolute power. No doubt, Sir George Seymour, in giving evidence before the Committee, did object to the power of the First Lord; but, with the exception of Sir George Seymour, there never was a doubt as to the absolute power of the First Lord as a Cabinet Minister. Again, the hon. and gallant Admiral is entirely mistaken in thinking that there was at that time any right on the part of any Member of the Board to protest against a decision. There never had been such a right.

Admiral FIELD: There was originally.

Mr. CHILDERS: I beg the hon. and gallant Gentleman's pardon. That was never the case, but I will not enter into a long argument upon the point. The question was raised and settled, when a Naval Lord become restive, when Sir John Pakington was First Lord of the Admiralty. I, for my part, am much in favour of Members of the Board having their names attached to important papers for which they are responsible, and I myself introduced the practice of the Estimates being signed as they now are. And now let me tell the hon. and gallant Admiral what was the effect of the Order in Council in 1869. Before 1869 it was impossible to fix upon any one of the Naval Lords the responsibility of any act. The Naval Lords were virtually in this position—I cannot tell how it was brought about, but they had occupied the position for some years—they had, in fact, come to be treated and looked upon by the country and Parliament as a small Committee of distinguished naval officers sharing the responsibility for naval, and especially professional, decisions. By the Order in Council this lax system was put an end to, the First Sea Lord was made absolutely responsible for the naval business of the country as a *quasi*-Commander-in-Chief, the Controller, as Third Lord, for all questions of shipbuilding, and the Financial Secretary for finance. Again, what the hon. and gallant Member (Admiral Mayne) had urged was to a certain extent done. For instance, there was attached to the First Naval Lord in that year a very distinguished officer, now Admiral Willes, who had the title of Chief of the Staff, and who acted as a sort of Assistant to the First Sea Lord. If Captain Willes, as he was then, had not been a sufficient Assistant to the Naval Lord, I should not have hesitated to appoint another. The main object of the Order in Council was—as I have said—to get rid of joint responsibility, and I think that I have now cleared up the point raised by the hon. and gallant Admiral. I have no wish to carry the debate further.

Captain COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.) said, he had no desire to enter into the question of the constitution of the Board of Admiralty, or to take part in the controversy between the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down and his hon. and gallant Friend the Member for the Eastbourne Division of Sussex (Admiral Field). This fact undoubtedly remained—that under the present system they were never able to fix responsibility upon any particular man. That was the whole case. Before offering some broad considerations to the House, he wished to congratulate the noble Lord (Lord George Hamilton) and the Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Forwood) upon the new form of Estimates. They realized the truth of the remark of the Duke of Somerset, that the first step in economy was precision of accounts. He thought the House would now be able to see the decisions to which the Admiralty arrived, and what was being done by the Board. The Secretary to the Admiralty, in the speech upon which the hon. and gallant Admiral had commented, spoke rather captiously, and altogether unnecessarily, of the value of experts. He (Captain Colomb) was not going to follow the lead of the hon. Gentleman; but, as the hon. Gentleman was himself an expert in mercantile business, he would draw his attention to the one fact that was clearly brought out by the new form of Estimates—namely, that we were spending nearly £500,000 a-year in paper, pens, and ink, and the men to use them, out of the total cost of our

Navy. The Admiralty Office itself cost £300,000 a-year, and for six Admirals employed at the Admiralty there were 450 clerks, or about 75 apiece. Notwithstanding, the Admiralty was really deprived by the system of expert assistance. The point he wished to draw attention to was the system of administration as judged by its results. There was a passage in the First Lord's Memorandum last year in which this remarkable statement was made—that although this country had the largest Fleet in the world, there was no central organization for utilizing the Fleet on an emergency. Now, "emergency" meant war, and central organization meant Admiralty; and yet, under the existing system, there was no means, 12 months ago, of utilizing the naval force of the country; and he would ask the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, or anyone who had been responsible for the administration of the Admiralty, whether he was satisfied with the condition of things, which must have brought about disaster upon us if a war had unhappily broken out? The Naval Intelligence Department had been a burning question, and the circumstances arising out of it had caused the noble Lord the Member for East Marylebone (Lord Charles Beresford) to resign. Everyone regretted the noble Lord's resignation and severance from the Admiralty. He (Captain Colomb) certainly did, on the broadest possible ground, because he considered it essential to the Service that the Board of Admiralty should be in direct touch with the young naval school. It was on the new school, rather than on the old, that the future of the country, as regards its naval safety, depended; and the great blot of our Admiralty system was that there were a handful of Admirals administering, and hardly any young officers coming in to learn how to perform the work of administration. There was evidence that the Admiralty itself was really averse to the creation of the Intelligence Department. It was an extraordinary thing that until 1882 we had nothing approaching a Department to collect and to utilize naval intelligence. What had been the experience of the noble Lord? He went to the Admiralty, and he had told his constituents a good many things connected with the experience he had gained; but the pith of it was contained in the passage in which he gave his conversation with the officials, shortly after he joined the Admiralty. He (Captain Colomb) read in *The Times* of 5th February the following statement:—

> "Could the saddle be placed on the right horse, it would be found that the recent doings at the Admiralty had not been initiated by the noble Lord or the Treasury, and that the real inspiration must be sought for elsewhere. It is an open secret that from its birth the Intelligence Department has encountered undisguised opposition from more quarters than one, and that there are those within the Admiralty who would gladly see it strangled altogether."

That was a letter written by Colonel Poé to *The Times*, who was actually in the Naval Intelligence Department himself, and it threw some light on the working of the system as it now existed. He asked the leave of the House to draw attention to the fact that nothing which had been stated by experts, or in the Press, justified the assertion that there was any proposal to do away with Parliamentary control, and to substitute for Parliamentary control and the responsibility of a Cabinet Minister a Board of Admirals. Such a proposition was absurd. What they did assert was that, under the existing system, responsibility could not be fixed. He appealed to the First Lord to say whether that was not true, and he would give an instance which would, he thought, bring the matter to a test. In the Memorandum of the First Lord of the Admiralty of this year it was stated that delay had occurred in the delivery of the guns, and the programme of Dockyard work had been deranged and prevented from being completed owing to the delay. He (Captain Colomb) asked if the noble Lord would name or fix the blame for this delay on any individual, or say what departments and individuals were to blame? In the statement made the other night by the Secretary to the Admiralty respecting the shipbuilding policy of the Government, he informed the House that the War Office had found it necessary to return to the Treasury a large sum of money which had been taken for naval ordnance last year, and which they had been unable to spend. He wanted the noble Lord to say who was responsible under the present system for asking Parliament for money to get guns, not knowing that the resources of the country were unable to produce them? Did the system shield the men, and, if not, would the First Lord name them? It was, he thought, so serious a question that it ought to be raised in that House. Parliament was asked to give money in order to supply guns, and then it turned out that the country could not produce them. Everybody knew that our mercantile ports were liable to attack from armed cruisers in war. The Secretary of State for War laid down a basis of assumption upon a doctrine which he himself defined. On page 9 of his Memorandum he said—

> "The recent improvements in guns have completely altered the conditions and the power of a naval attack; and it has in consequence appeared to Her Majesty's Government that a thorough examination of the general state of our defences should no longer be delayed."

But there was not a word in the First Lord of the Admiralty's Memorandum as to a corresponding increased power of naval defence due to the same cause. Was it because the Government had not got, and could not get, sufficiently rapidly the guns required, and if the Navy could not get the guns required, how were the forts to get them? That was a matter which was very germane, as showing the results of the present system. They wanted to know distinctly what the policy of the country was, because one could not say whether the organization was adapted to the country's wants or not. It had now for some time been the habit of the officials of the Admiralty to use very vague phrases, and to make general statements. A statement was made the other night by the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty which exactly followed in the footsteps of the utterances of his recent Predecessors. What the country wanted to know was, if our naval forces were sufficient to secure us from attack? He and his hon. and gallant Friends asked the Admiralty officials to give them information on that point, and the noble Lord got up and said—

> "I do not know by what means you can test the relative superiority of this country as compared with other countries, except by taking the number of ships, the number of men, and the number of guns, and comparing them with the number of ships, the number of men, and the number of guns which those respective nations have."

But that did not prove anything with regard to superiority. He (Captain Colomb) submitted that superiority was the power necessary to keep the enemy's battle ships in their harbours, and that to estimate its power all abstract comparisons were absolutely valueless. He did not blame the noble Lord at all, but he did blame the system. He complained that there was not a department so organized for war behind the noble Lord as would prevent the noble Lord making abstract comparisons as a standard of measurement of our safety. Now, in following that out, the noble Lord told them, and comforted the country by saying, that we had 21 battle ships in commission and reserve, that France had 16 of such ships, and that Russia had five. The noble Lord thus argued that in naval strength we were only equal to Russia and France put together; but let them take France alone. Could the 21 ships of England keep the 16 similar ships of France in French ports? It could only be done by British relative superiority in war outside the ports in which those ships were. This was not merely a question of ship for ship, because the ships which were inside did not consume coal, while the ships that were outside were consuming coal every hour and minute. There were other causes besides coaling that would necessitate their leaving their position, and therefore one could not base calculations of superiority merely on the abstract question of numbers. He asked the noble Lord to take the 16 ships of France and the 21 ships of England, and to give the House an illustration of how he supposed we could keep continuously a superior force outside during any period of war. Take the five French ports of Cherbourg, Brest, Rochefort, L'Orient, and Toulon. Were France to mass the 16 vessels in Toulon, was our policy to evacuate the Channel? If her policy was to mass her 16 vessels in an Atlantic port, was it the naval policy of this country to evacuate the Mediterranean? Suppose she distributed the 16 vessels among all her five ports, how could we keep the five ports continuously blocked with a superior force with only 21 similar ships to do it with? The whole question was not one of the number of ships we could put there, but of the number we could keep there, and that was a question of reliefs and reserves. In no case, and under no conditions, could we, on the First

Lord's representations of the 16 and 21 ships respectively, attempt to mask the battle force of France, and have any effective reserve fleet in the Channel at all. He wished, in conclusion, to say one or two words upon principles of organization, in respect to the protection of commerce, and under two heads that must be divided—the commerce off the coasts, and the commerce on the high seas. Now, the issue of armed vessels—he meant vessels temporarily armed for purposes of attack—the issue of armed vessels from an enemy's ports was not met by blockading the war ports. All experience of recent wars showed that the mercantile ports of an enemy and neutral ports must be observed very closely, and that even then armed cruisers would slip out. He did not find in the utterances of the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty any mention of the protection of our offings by arming our mercantile vessels in a suitable manner. Now, two forces, different in their natures, would attack our commerce—the improvised marauders, commissioned and turned into war-ships for that purpose, and such war cruisers of the enemy as might be at sea or might escape from their ports. He did not believe we had to fear so very much the war cruisers of the enemy; what we had to fear were the improvised armed cruisers, commissioned for the special purpose of preying on our commerce. The First Lord of the Admiralty made use of language in his speech which very much astonished him (Captain Colomb). He would read the whole passage, because he felt it was a matter which should be commented upon. Alluding to the remarks of the noble Lord the Member for East Marylebone (Lord Charles Beresford), the First Lord of the Admiralty said—

> "My noble Friend criticized the statement in which I remarked that 'when we consider the defence and protection which our commerce may require, extreme caution and reserve must be exercised,' and that 'nothing but actual experience could justify any confident prediction as to how a thoroughly effective protection can be given by any fleet' to our enormous Mercantile Marine,"

and then he threw down this challenge to the House—

> "Will any single naval officer get up and answer how that can be done?"

That was a very remarkable challenge for the First Lord of the Admiralty to make, and he (Captain Colomb) intended to comment upon it, because he thought that, by an examination of it, it would be seen that under our present system the Admiralty had not thoroughly examined even the rudiments of the question of the protection of commerce, otherwise such a challenge would never have been given by the First Lord. The First Lord then went on to say—

> "I have the advantage, as First Lord, to come in contact with many distinguished officers going out to take commands and coming home, and I find the most extraordinary diversity of opinion as to how effective protection can be given to our enormous Mercantile Marine; and if that opinion does exist, why am I to be attacked for giving expression to it in the Memorandum?"

Now, the noble Lord surely knew, or rather if they had a proper system at the Admiralty he would know, that the reason there was this great diversity of opinion among naval officers was that naval officers, under the present system, were not supplied with information as to the movements of the commerce which in war time they were to protect. They were not informed even as to the distribution of the commerce, nor of the laws and circumstances which governed its movements on the ocean. He reminded the Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Forwood) that on the 8th of August last year he asked the hon. Gentleman whether the Admiralty supplied information to the Admirals and naval officers at home and abroad as to the distribution of commerce in the area entrusted to their charge for protection in case of war; and that hon. Gentleman, as he (Captain Colomb) knew he would be obliged to say, did say that such information was not supplied to naval officers. The hon. Gentleman, however, in the language he used, held out a hope that naval officers would be informed that arrangements would be made some day for informing Admirals in charge of stations what were the interests, and where were the interests, they had to protect in time of war. It was rather strange that the noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty should expect that any man in the House should get up, and tell him in a few minutes how we were to arrange for the protection of a commerce on the sea amounting in value to £1,000,000,000 sterling a-year, a commerce with ramifications, varied, and very great, and yet governed by fixed laws. That was the commerce which the Admiralty and the Navy were responsible for, and it was not merely the commerce of this country with foreign countries. This was a complicated problem, and for this reason—there was the interchange between this country and our own Possessions; there was the interchange between this country and foreign Possessions in every sea; there was the interchange between the outlying Possessions of the Empire and foreign countries independent from that of the Mother Country; and there was the interchange of the different parts of the outlying Empire with each other. The laws of supply and demand ruled not only the direction but the volume of commerce in different parts of the ocean in different times of the year. There was an accumulation in one part of an ocean at one season of the year, and the accumulation would be found in another part of that ocean at another season of the year; and it was, he could assure the noble Lord, a matter which alarmed him more than he could say that our system had produced nothing for the protection of our enormous commerce but a challenge from the head of the Admiralty that some Member should get up and tell the Admiralty how our commerce was to be protected. He was not, as he had said, blaming the noble Lord, but was merely trying to enforce on the House and on the country the gravity of the situation. No further proof was wanted that, so far as the protection of commerce was concerned, the existing system had not produced, and did not know how to produce, an organization for war. Perhaps the most interesting and the most important part of that Memorandum was the paragraph referring to the creation of an Australasian wing of the Royal Navy. The noble Lord told them in that paragraph of the arrangements in which the Australian Colonies joined with us in increasing the naval protection of British commerce in the South Pacific Ocean. Let him draw the attention of the House to a few figures relating to the extent of our commerce. The annual value of British commerce in the South Pacific Ocean in the year was £120,000,000 sterling, and it was because there was such a vast amount of value in trade there that this increase of force had been created. But between the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean lay the Indian Ocean, and the annual value to the Empire of the Indian Ocean was £160,000,000 sterling—that was £40,000,000 more than the South Pacific. These values were obtained by the total export and import values of all the Empire with ports, British and foreign, within that area. Therefore, when he said that the value of the South Pacific Ocean was £120,000,000 sterling, he meant that the interchange between all British Possessions beyond the area of the South Pacific with all ports, British and foreign, in the South Pacific, was in the year of the value of £120,000,000 sterling. But there was another point to be taken into account. Commerce in its transit from the Pacific to the Atlantic and from the Atlantic to the Pacific had to pass over the Indian Ocean; therefore, while the local value of the South Pacific was annually £120,000,000 sterling, and the local value of the Indian Ocean to us was £160,000,000 sterling in the year, a portion of the Pacific and Atlantic commerce passing and re-passing added to the value of the Indian Ocean. The value of the extra amount so passing through the Indian Ocean was, roughly speaking, £50,000,000 sterling a-year, so that brought the value of the Indian Ocean up to over £200,000,000 sterling a-year. He asked the attention of the House to this. We had increased our naval force in the Australasian Seas and South Pacific, because we had there a commerce of the estimated value of £120,000,000 sterling a-year, but he asked them to recollect that the Indian Ocean was worth to us over £200,000,000 sterling a-year. Now, the increasing of our naval power in the South Pacific would have the effect of keeping the hostile cruisers we feared off, but where would they go? Into the richer area of the Indian Ocean, and what were our preparations for an increased naval force in the Indian Ocean? He was sorry to say that in the same year that this measure was produced for increasing the naval force in the Australasian waters, and in the same Estimates in which provision for that increase was made, they found that there was a decrease in the contribution towards the Indian Fleet of £31,000. On page 25 of the Estimates the reason of that was given. The reason was that four vessels would be maintained in the Indian waters in 1888-9 in lieu of six vessels in 1887-8. He was afraid he had hardly made himself sufficiently clear to the House; but he would point out the broad fact that while we increased our forces in the South Pacific on account of having goods there annually to the value of £120,000,000 sterling, we had cut down our force in the Indian Seas where the value of our commerce, amounted to £200,000,000 sterling a-year. One word more, to come nearer home. Let them look at our naval dangers nearer home in connection with organization for war. The Secretary of State for War told them that they might assume that the mercantile ports might be attacked by naval forces, and that they must be prepared to defend them, and that they would be asked for money for forts, guns, and for submarine mines. The right hon. Gentleman made that statement on the Report of a Committee, which Report was in the hands of every Member of the House. In that Report he (Captain Colomb) had read that the defence of our ports resolved itself into two parts, the active and the passive. The active included the provision of gun-boats and, in a few cases, of iron-clads. It was proved to the Committee, so said the Report, that the effective protection of many ports was practically impossible, unless an active defence were provided. He presumed the First Lord of the Admiralty agreed with that. If so, why was he in his Memorandum so silent on the subject of active defence? Why was there not provision in the Estimates for this active defence which was essentially necessary to all ports, and without which some ports, according to the Committee, could not be protected at all? The Secretary of State for War further told them that—

> "The great change, precision, and penetration of the new types of heavy guns absolutely require that all ports likely to be subjected to their attack should possess means of keeping them at a sufficient distance."

The distance was the range of the guns and no more, and all that we got by a passive military defence of a mercantile port without an active naval defence was that the enemy's ships would take up a position just beyond the range of our shore guns. What was the effect of this? Why, it was that ingress and egress to and from that port would be stopped. Until we got the offing clear, all the operations of the port were suspended. Therefore, he thought there must be something terribly wrong in our national system. In one week we had this statement made and recorded in the Secretary of State for War's Memorandum, and yet absolute silence upon it in the First Lord of the Admiralty's Memorandum this week. He said again, he did not blame the First Lord of the Admiralty, but blamed the system; he was pointing out some of the great, broad results we had from the present system, which, in his opinion, were most unsatisfactory. It was, he believed, the improvised armed marauders which would prey upon the accumulation of shipping at home, as well as in foreign waters, and the areas of the greatest accumulation in the home waters were the offings of our ports—we had no organized system to keep these offings clear. We were told that these ports in time of war might be attacked by hostile cruisers, and that we must provide against this; but we had no arrangements whatever to prevent, as the Secretary of State for War pointed out, hostile cruisers taking up their position just outside the range of the shore guns, and stopping traffic coming in and out of our ports. What did this mean for this country, what did it mean when we remembered how we were totally dependent upon the ingress and egress of our trade? It meant this—that the system did not provide us with an organization adapted for war; it meant that we ought to begin at the beginning, and look at the necessities of the case and adapt our forces to meet those necessities. He was sorry to have detained the House so long; but it was exceedingly difficult to deal with such large questions in an intelligible way in a short space of time. In parting with the question, and before he resumed his seat, he desired to ask the House to remember that there was a continuous stream in and out of the ports, and if we had no organization for the protection and security of that stream, even from mercantile marauders improvised and armed for the purpose, much damage would be done to our commerce. What was the force and volume of that stream? It might be briefly brought home to the House in this way. The entering and clearing of ships at our home ports was at the rate of 21 tons per second; two ships went in and out per minute, and therefore one could get some idea of the effect of a want of arrangement for securing free ingress and egress to this commercial stream. When they had abstract comparisons between the number of ships we had and the number of ships other countries had, let it be borne in mind that we had duties to perform with respect to the protection of commerce which other countries had not. For instance, the sea trade of London was in value three times the total sea-borne commerce of Russia, and the London and Liverpool trade put together largely exceeded the total sea-borne trade of all France. These were grave matters, and they required consideration. He trusted the House would forgive him for prolonging the debate; he would not have done so had he not felt the circumstances to be grave. He confessed that, much as he suspected the want of organization for war before, he had never been so convinced of it as now, when he compared the Secretary of State for War's Memorandum with that of the First Lord of the Admiralty, and when he heard the First Lord of the Admiralty ask any independent Member of the House to tell him off hand how England was to defend her commerce.

SIR CHARLES PALMER (Durham, Jarrow) said, the appointment of the noble and gallant Lord the Member for East Marylebone (Lord Charles Beresford) to a position in the Admiralty was a popular one, and his resignation had been viewed with regret. He could not understand, if half of the noble and gallant Lord's statement was correct, why the noble and gallant Lord should have forsaken his guns instead of sticking to them until they had been able to introduce the reforms in the Admiralty. The noble and gallant Lord must have known when he was at the Admiralty that sweeping and important changes were being made in the administration at Whitehall and at the Dockyards. Indeed, the Memorandum of the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) was one of the clearest expositions as to the state of the Navy which he could remember. It was evident from the Memorandum that there must have been sweeping changes made in connection with our Dockyard system as well as other parts of the administration. He observed that the reforms began in 1885. No doubt they had arisen, in a great measure, from the Report of the Committee of Experts appointed by Lord Northbrook. He wished to know, as regarded the administration at Whitehall, whether any change had been made in the powers and the responsibility of the Controller of the Navy. He had often felt that the Controller of the Navy was not suited to the administration of the Dockyard system. He was a naval officer without technical training, and, however much one might admire his talents as a naval officer, he ought not to be held responsible for the details of shipbuilding to the First Lord of the Admiralty. Again, in his opinion, there ought to be a more direct communication and responsibility thrown on the Dockyard Chief Constructors and taken away from the Admiral Superintendents. Those who had the control and responsibility for building ships and for their repairs ought to have control over the workmen. At present they had none whatever. If a workman had misconducted himself, he usually had a reprimand and was sent back to work, the recommendation of the Superintendent of the Dockyard in the matter being wholly passed over. A large sum of money was squandered in connection with the repair of ships, and he wished to know whether the recommendation of the Committee had been carried out as to doing all the repairs in the Dockyards? No doubt the recommendations in regard to preparing designs and specifications before laying down a ship, and that when once the designs and specifications were settled the vessel should be completed without delay, had been followed. That, no doubt, had prevented and would prevent Supplementary Estimates, and it would also be the means of avoiding a great deal of friction to the overseers. The Memorandum of the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty, in dealing with the shipbuilding programme, was rather hard on private contractors. He said—

> "This programme has been very nearly realized, and would have been actually carried out but for delays in the delivery of contract-built ships, the non-completion of guns by the promised dates, and the difficulties that have arisen

in completing some of the contractors' steam trials."

He hoped that the noble Lord would remember that private shipbuilders were the pioneers in shipbuilding and in engine building in connection with the Navy, and that it was through them that they obtained high speed and economy of engines. The House was informed that they had now arrived at more accuracy in the Estimates. He wished to know in what way it was proposed to deal with incidental charges and national charges? There was a certain proportion of wages in the shape of pensions, and he asked whether the pensions were brought into the cost of construction? If that was not so, the comparison between the cost of building ships in the Dockyards and in private yards was as fallacious and absurd as it was formerly. That pension system was not consistent with the reform of the Dockyards, and it was subversive of all discipline as regarded the men. He hoped that the day was not far distant when the Admiralty would take a strong course, and put the workmen in the Dockyards on the same footing as those in private yards. Turning to another point, he asked whether the Admiralty proposed to contract for their stores in the latter part of the year and before they knew what their shipbuilding programme would be, as they had hitherto done, in consequence of which stores were ordered that were not required, and put away and left to rot, or sold at a very small price afterwards. Again, they had been told that the staff of designers would be brought forward for gun mountings. He asked had that been accomplished, because the Navy had been dependent on private yards for these designs? With regard to the torpedo question, the First Lord of the Admiralty might attach some blame to naval experts for not having informed him before that the class of torpedo boats was unsuitable for navigation with the Fleet; and if they were condemned by seamen, as he believed they would be, he hoped that the noble Lord would utilize them for the defence of our commercial harbours. He congratulated the noble Lord on having taken a new departure in reference to shipbuilding and having omitted the iron-clads. In that he believed the Admiralty had done right, though naval opinion might differ from it. Foreign Maritime Powers were acquiring fast cruisers, and vessels of high speed and capable of keeping the sea for a long time were what we wanted in order to protect our ever-increasing Mercantile Marine. It was of no use talking of iron-clads in connection with our Mercantile Marine. They might do at certain stations; but what we wanted was a large fleet of fast belted cruisers to go all over the world. With a radical reform in the Dockyard system, and with the class of ships which they were now proposing to build, he believed that they would receive more for their money, and the country would be much more contented than they had hitherto been with the state of the Navy.

SIR JOHN PULESTON (Devonport) said, that a great deal had been said as to the responsibility and the control of the Admiralty; but he thought that the country and the House would continue in the future, as in the past, to hold the First Lord of the Admiralty mainly responsible for everything that took place in the Admiralty, and for the conduct of all matters connected with the Navy. They were all agreed that it was essential that every man in the Admiralty Department, whether he be an admiral or a clerk, should have certain defined duties, and should be expected to give a strict account to the First Lord. He was sure that they were all agreed in regretting the absence from the Admiralty of the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone (Lord Charles Beresford), and in hoping that the noble Lord would soon be able to see his way to rejoin the Board. They all knew that the noble Lord was a brilliant officer of the Navy, and that he was fully acquainted with all matters concerning the Navy, and had the interests of the Service at heart. It was a matter of national regret that the noble Lord had found it necessary to resign his post. He (Sir John Puleston) admitted, however, that they could put against the disadvantage of losing the services of the noble Lord the advantage of having had a discussion in the House and elsewhere which probably they would not have had but for the noble Lord's resignation. He was fully persuaded that good would result from the very interesting and instructive discussion which had taken place. But, after all, the public would dwell more upon the practical question as to whether our Navy was in an efficient condition, and as to whether it was large enough to cope with all the great and growing interests of our country. He did not think it was quite sufficient to compare our Navy's tonnage with the tonnage of the Fleets of other nations. In making such a comparison they naturally took into account a large amount of tonnage which would be absolutely useless in time of war; but, assuming that the calculation was entirely admissible—which he contended it was not—he still said that was not the way in which they should dwell upon the necessities of our Navy. They should compare our Navy with the measure of our great commercial interests, which were greater than those of all the other countries put together. Our Fleet should be in proportion to those interests rather than in proportion to the Fleet of any other Power. There had also been for years past a great deal of discussion in the House upon the condition of our coaling stations. He understood that our coaling stations were still unprotected. Measures had been taken to remedy to some extent the evil which had been the subject of discussion; but, even now, if war broke out, a good deal of our effective force would be used in protecting stations which, by the adoption of a far more economical policy, could be made to protect themselves, and in this way release in times of great emergency our active forces for other and more important duties. The First Lord of the Admiralty stated that if there were any deficiency in the Navy it was not a deficiency in money or in ships, but in guns. That was a very serious statement for the noble Lord to make. They were able to understand the gravity of the statement by recollecting what had happened in the case of the *Collingwood.* That vessel was to have been fitted with new guns in a few months, but it had taken two years or two years and a-half to complete the work. He would like to know whether such a question as the supply of guns could be gone into before the Committee on the Naval Estimates? If not, he presumed it could be gone into fully by the Royal Commission. It was important to know whether they were able to go into a matter of such serious consequence before the Committee on Naval Estimates; therefore, he trusted the First Lord would give them some information upon the subject. With reference to the economies in the Naval Estimates, he agreed that the Navy Estimates ought to be kept down to the lowest minimum consistent with the efficiency of the Service. But everyone who had spoken in the debate had urged that the Navy was not what it ought to be. Neither in size nor in quality was it adequate to any great emergency. Might he suggest that they could arrive at a means of improving and greatly enlarging the Navy without placing a burden upon the taxpayer by increasing the Naval Estimates? The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) had, with great credit to himself and great advantage to the country, just promoted a scheme of converting the National Debt, under which the country would immediately save £1,500,000 sterling, and prospectively save another £1,500,000 sterling. If the right hon. Gentleman would appropriate, for the purposes of national defence, out of this saving a sum of not more than £350,000 a-year, that would be the measure of the annual charge on £10,000,000 sterling, repayable by means of a Sinking Fund in 50 years, which could be at once raised without cost to the country. He ventured to say that there was not one hon. Member of the House—and that there was no one in the country, no matter what his politics might be—who would object to such a use being made of so small a portion of the amount which was to be saved by the Chancellor of the Exchequer's conversion scheme. He trusted that his noble Friend (Lord George Hamilton) would consider the suggestions worthy of some thought. The hon. Baronet the Member for the Jarrow Division of Durham (Sir Charles Palmer) had referred to the Dockyards. He did not understand whether the hon. Baronet was in favour of extinguishing the Dockyards altogether, or of making more use of them; but he rather imagined that the former plan was in the hon. Baronet's mind. The hon. Baronet referred to the pension system in the Dockyards, and remarked that the pension system was part of the cost of the National Dockyards, and ought to be taken into account in estimating the cost of the shipbuilding and other work done in the

Dockyards. His hon. Friend failed to make a comparison between the wages paid in private shipbuilding yards and the wages paid in the Dockyards. There were times when the wages in private shipbuilding yards had been double—they were frequently one-third more—than those paid in the Dockyards. There were many persons present, including the hon. Baronet (Sir Charles Palmer) himself, who were far more competent to discuss this subject than he was; but they would admit that he (Sir John Puleston) was quite within the mark in making the statement that the *employés* in private yards got far more wages than men employed in the National Dockyards. Under such circumstances, how was it that men undertook work in the Dockyards? It was simply because of the pension system. Men were willing to accept a lower rate of pay when there was a certainty of a pension or of a gratuity as they grew old. It was for this reason that the establishment of the Dockyards was one of great consequence to the Government and the country. In estimating the cost of the Dockyards, it was a mistake to suppose that the National Dockyards existed only for the building of ships. The other day it was said that the *Magicienne* and the *Marathon* had cost £140,000, whereas the sister ship the *Melpomene,* built in the Portsmouth Dockyard, cost £15,000 or £20,000 more. To compare the cost of ships in this way was a very delusive mode of estimating the cost of maintaining the Dockyards, because the Dockyards existed for other purposes besides the building of isolated ships. The existence of the Dockyards was a matter of national consequence, and certainly they ought never to be abolished; but better abolish them than leave them at great cost without full work, while the work was given to private yards. He regretted very much to see from the newspapers that another large discharge of men, hitherto employed in the boiler establishment at Sheerness, was contemplated, not on account of the want of work, but because, as the newspapers asserted, the work had been given to private contractors. He asserted—and he was persuaded every business man in the country would agree with him—that it was not business, at all events, and it could not be profitable finance, to allow plant and property, such as we had in our Dockyards, to remain idle, while work was given to private contractors. If the work could not be properly performed in the Dockyards, it was the fault of those who had the control of the Dockyards. Men in the Dockyards did their work well. No one in the Admiralty had ever ventured to say that Dockyard work was not well done. There was another reason why comparisons might not be drawn between the cost of building ships in the Dockyards and in private yards. It was a fact that a very considerable number of ships built by private contractors had had, after a very short time, to be overhauled in the Dockyards. Besides, there were times when it was impossible to get work done in private yards at any reasonable price at all. It was not very long ago — not further back than the time of the Russian War—when it was very essential to have certain vessels then being built, that private yards by themselves had been unable to do the work required. What happened at that time? There was a great strike, owing to the great pressure and demand for labour, in the private building yards, and the Admiralty had to send drafts of men from the Royal Yards to Millwall to put the vessels then being built at Millwall in a sufficiently forward condition to enable them to be brought to the Dockyards to be fitted. Such a state of matters might happen again in the time of a great war, and, if we had no Royal Dockyards to fall back upon, it was quite possible to conceive that the consequences might be most disastrous. The fact was that the amount of what was called control at the Dockyards was so great, and the discharges of men had been so large, that only a very simple mathematical calculation was necessary to enable us to come to the conclusion that the supervisers and controllers would soon be greater in number than the *employés.* No one who had ever occupied the post of First Lord of the Admiralty was more anxious to do full justice and to act equitably to everybody in the employ of the Department, and at the same time to do his duty to the Service itself, than the noble Lord who now occupied the position of First Lord. No man had so well mastered the difficulties of the position as the present First Lord, and he (Sir John Puleston) thanked the noble Lord for the courtesy he had always displayed in his dealings with what were called "Dockyard Representatives." There was no one more unwelcome to the Admiralty than a so-called "Dockyard Member." Whenever the Representative of a Dockyard constituency approached the Admiralty he was treated with the greatest disdain, though his suggestions were so reasonable that the Admiralty could scarcely refrain from adopting or considering them. The officials of the Admiralty seemed to regard their Department in the light of a close Corporation, and for that reason he seldom approached the Admiralty. A great deal had been said about the control at the Admiralty. No doubt, too much had been made of the matter, but there was certainly something in the complaint. There was an exhibition of the want of control the other day in Devonport. There was a great scare and tremendous excitement in that town because an order, signed by an official at Whitehall, had been sent down to the Controller's Office to prepare an Estimate for providing for 1,100 or more fewer men at Devonport, and this, hon. Members would note, was after the assurance had been officially, as well as privately, given by the First Lord of the Admiralty that no more discharges were contemplated, as was shown by the programme of work. He thought the First Lord's assurance was quite correct, because, judging from the amount of work to be done, there seemed to be no question that fewer men would be required. As a matter of fact, in Portsmouth they were already taking on more men. The First Lord very kindly and promptly said there was no truth in the rumour that these discharges were contemplated; but he could not have been aware of what the officials at the Admiralty were doing in the matter. The town was thrown into confusion by the rumour. The Admiral Superintendent at Devonport was appealed to at once in order to allay the excitement; but he, a man of secretive mind, refused to give any information. It was impossible, however, that such a serious order like the one he had alluded to, having, as it had, to pass through so many hands, should not leak out. He read it, as the public generally read it, in the newspapers. That did not speak very much for the control; and he thought that the sooner the First Lord of the Admiralty had a little more, rather than less, control over the Controller's Department, and every other Department of the Service, the better it would be for the Service, and everybody connected with it. He trusted that the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty would give his serious attention to the suggestion which had been made as to an alteration in the hours of labour in the Dockyards. It had been suggested that in the summer time work in the Yards should cease at 5 o'clock. By this means there would be no lessening of the hours of labour; but the change would, he thought, conduce to the well-being of all the men employed in the Yards. When the Committee stage was reached there were a few other matters to which he desired to refer, and especially as to some points of importance affecting the warrant officers, a body of men reflecting so much credit on the Service; also as to the shipwrights, whose Petitions had not been even noticed; and also the engine-room artificers, whose position now should be more compatible with the increased and increasing importance of their duties.

MR. GOURLEY (Sunderland) said, he held that the first effect of war would be to drive nearly all our commerce into neutral bottoms, and that the only remedy was an extension of the Treaty of Paris on the lines formulated by the late Mr. Marcy, who was the American Minister deputed to attend the Conference when the Declaration of Paris was signed. With reference to the speech delivered on a former occasion by the noble Lord the Member for East Marylebone (Lord Charles Beresford), he agreed that greater responsibility ought to be imposed upon the heads of the Departments at the Admiralty, provided that the responsibility of the First Lord remained the same as now. While an improvement had been made with regard to the mode of completing new ships, no improvement had been taken with regard to repairs, and the system ought to be seriously considered. At present, neither a commander nor chief engineer had the power to order on his own responsibility as much as a pound of candles. The result was that when a vessel was taken to Sheerness or elsewhere for some repair, however small, the commander or engineer must make a requisition, which was forwarded from

Department to Department, with the result that work which could be done in 48 hours was not completed until after the lapse of 12 or 14 days. How, he asked, would that system succeed in a time of great emergency? An instance of the delay for which this system was responsible occurred only a short time ago, when the machinery of the *Buzzard* broke down, and when the work of repair which could have been executed in a few days was spread over a verymuch longer time—nearly three months. Work which could be done by the crew of a vessel on her return home for next to nothing often cost hundreds of pounds. Not long ago, the captain of a ship desired that some little alteration should be made in his cabin, and suggested that it could be done by his own carpenters. The suggestion, however, was not acceded to; a gang of joiners were sent on board, the cabins were pulled to pieces, and thus work which could have been done for 5*s.* cost the country a very much larger sum—he (Mr. Gourley) believed £1,300. He was sorry that the Board had not taken a new departure in the matter of designs. He should like to see a Constructive Council consisting of three Naval Lords, two shipbuilders, two engineers, and the Financial Secretary, and presided over by the First Lord; and to this Council the Chief Constructor and the Chief Engineer should submit designs and costs for shipbuilding in the Navy. They should consider those designs, and when once a design had been passed, no alteration should be allowed to be made during the progress of construction; and the Chief Constructor and the Chief Engineer should be absolutely responsible for any defect which might arise in the construction of a vessel as between the original design and the final completion down to the time of the ship being commissioned. This would be a means of preventing such mistakes as had occurred in the cases of the *Ajax*, the *Agamemnon*, the *Impérieuse*, and others. He did not find from the Memorandum that any provision was made for exercising control over the consumption of coals and stores. Many commanders and engineers were more extravagant than others, and there ought to be a system of checking them. [The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Forwood): So there is.] He was glad to hear it, but there was no mention of it in the Memorandum. Every year about £20,000 was demanded for Coastguard buildings in which we now had invested £1,000,000 or £1,500,000, which represented £300 per house per man. Surely the time had come when the pruning knife might be applied to this expenditure; and it would probably be as well if half the men were kept afloat. He recognized the great reforms in Dockyard administration under the *régime* of the present First Lord, one result of which was that ships were now built so rapidly that they had to wait months for their guns—another matter in which reform was required. He saw no reason why we should have four Dockyards—two great Yards in full work were, he thought, enough, for their multiplication added greatly to the cost both in London and in the Yards. With fewer Yards we should diminish the expense of supervision. Why should we have four if France could do with two? It was said that when Woolwich was closed the Navy would go to the dogs; but it had not suffered from that step. Replying to the First Lord's statements regarding the comparative strength of the British and French Navies, he held that the comparative strength of Navies was to be tested by the power of guns, the speed of vessels, the armour of vessels, and coal endurance. Comparing our second-class iron-clads with those of France in these respects, he inferred that the superiority was possessed by France, because all her second-class iron-clads were armed with breech-loading guns, whilst ours were of the old muzzle-loading type.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing) said, that it was time the discussion now ended, and in the hope of accelerating the time when the Speaker might leave the Chair he would answer some of the questions that had been put by hon. Members. He fully recognized the value of the testimony of the hon. Member for Jarrow (Sir Charles Palmer) as to the improvement in the Dockyards. The hon. Baronet was the head of one of the largest shipbuilding firms in the Kingdom, and his approval was all the more valuable on that account. He could assure him there was no disposition on the part of the Admiralty, as the hon, Member for Devonport (Sir John Puleston) seemed to think, to unduly reduce the Dockyard Establishments. They had now made arrangements by which they hoped hereafter to be able to give work permanently to certain establishments; and if it was necessary to increase the number of men at any one Dockyard, these men would be taken on for casual work, and when that work was over they would be discharged. At the same time, it was not intended to make any reduction of private work. Considering the magnitude and novelty of the work which private yards undertook in 1885, the work had been done with great rapidity; and if there were firms that, in consequence of the novelty of the requirements, had not been able to complete their contracts within the specified time, the firm of the hon. Baronet (Sir Charles Palmer) was not among them, for, indeed, his firm had delivered their ships some time in advance. With regard to the number of iron-clads waiting for guns there were four so waiting, one of them being the *Collingwood*, which had been waiting for them since October, 1886; but it was not through any fault connected with the Department at Woolwich that the delay at occurred. There were also four belted cruisers nearly ready for guns, and they would practically be quite ready by the time the guns were ready to be put on board. Great pressure had been brought to bear on the Admiralty to induce them to spend a large sum of money in increasing the number of torpedo boats. So far as torpedo boats were concerned, we had only sufficient to protect our fortresses at home and abroad. The hon. and gallant Member for the Eastbourne Division of Sussex (Admiral Field) was very anxious that the Naval Lords should be put in a better position than they now occupied. He (Lord George Hamilton) was bound to say that he could not exactly understand what the hon. and gallant Gentleman was driving at. They were told that the great principle to establish was that of individual responsibility. The Board could not be in its collective capacity a good executive machine, because responsibility could not be brought home to anyone; and the hon. and gallant Gentleman had struggled to revive the old system by which all business was done by the Board day by day, and under which no man was responsible. The system now was that each Naval Lord was responsible for his own Department. In regard to what had been said as to the responsibility of the Naval Lords, the executive business was transacted outside the Board, and all questions of principle and policy were discussed at the Board, which was a most useful Council for consultative purposes or for dealing with questions of policy. The Naval Lords must retain in their own hands the power of dealing with executive questions in their own Departments, and be responsible for the Departments under them. To go back to the old system would not only cause an enormous amount of delay, but would result in the Board over and over again having to reverse its decisions. The hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Bow (Captain Colomb) referred to a certain statement in the Memorandum, in which he (Lord George Hamilton) declined to say precisely in what manner the Navy in time of war would most effectually protect commerce. That was not a question on which they could speak with confidence, because there had been no great naval war in recent years. Therefore, experience upon the subject was wanting. One thing, however, was perfectly clear—that our commerce was in the greatest danger when it passed through the land-locked seas, or where the great stream of commerce passed nearest to the land, which would afford protection to hostile cruisers; and it was, therefore, clear that it was the policy of the Government to husband their strength by having a large force in reserve at home. That was the policy which the Board pursued. They had often been attacked for not sending their first-class iron-clads to foreign waters; but there were but few iron-clads in commission on the high seas belonging to foreign nations. If they excluded the iron-clads in the European seas, there were only two belonging to Foreign Powers on the high seas on distant stations. That being so, and the policy of other nations being to concentrate their forces at home, we must do the same. The policy of the Government was opposed to any wholesale building of vessels, for if the Admiralty laid down a large number of ships at one time, so rapid was the change in design and in the development of speed that they would probably in 10 or 15 years be obsolete or useless. Therefore, nothing was clearer, if we were to maintain our strength continuously, than that we should year by year lay down a certain number of vessels. He was, therefore, altogether adverse to wholesale outlay; but what they believed to be absolutely necessary for the efficiency of the Navy was that the expenditure should be continuous, and kept, if possible, at the same level; but the difficuity at the present moment was not the want of ships, but of gun-producing power. The desire of the Admiralty was that ships should be built and pushed on as rapidly as possible; but it was no use putting an excessive amount of money in ships, if those ships had to wait for guns and ammunition. Last year they estimated that £1,800,000 was the minimum amount to be spent year by year to make good depreciation and waste in the Fleet; but this year they were spending £2,070,000 in shipbuilding, and £2,970,000 for depreciation, in addition to £500,000 on the Australian Squadron. Their object had been throughout, both in framing the Estimates and in establishing the depreciation fund, to insure continuity of policy, so that, whoever might be First Lord, if he attempted to diminish the amount spent in shipbuilding below that fixed for depreciation or waste, or if he chose to increase the amount, he should give his explanation to the House. By this means he thought that they would succeed in gradually, but effectually, raising the strength of the Navy to a point which, he hoped, would bring assurance and confidence to the minds of hon. Gentlemen. He was glad to inform the House that, with regard to gun mounting, they had been very successful. Only yesterday the two large 110-ton guns of the *Benbow* were thoroughly tried and tested with their new mountings, and the result was most satisfactory. He quite agreed with the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Eastbourne Division of Sussex that it was very important to have a Dockyard at Bombay, on the East Indian Station, capable of holding the largest iron-clad in Her Majesty's Navy. The hon. and gallant Member had, however, very much underestimated the cost. The Board were in communication with the Indian Government on the subject, and it appeared that the adequate enlargement of the existing docks would involve a much larger sum than that mentioned. But he quite agreed that it was essential there should be a dock on the East Indian Station which would take in any vessel in the Navy that was likely to go there for any purpose, and the hon. and gallant Member might rely upon it that they would take the necessary measures to insure that result.

Question, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," put, and *agreed to.*

SUPPLY—NAVY ESTIMATES.

SUPPLY—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

(1.) 62,400, Men and Boys.

(2.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £3,112,700, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Expense of Wages, &c. to Officers, Seamen, and Boys, Coast Guard, and Royal Marines, and the Half-Pay of Officers, which will come in course of payment during the course of the year ending on the 31st day of March 1889."

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD (Marylebone, E.) said, he wanted to have an explanation from the First Lord as to whether the Committee which sat at the Admiralty when he (Lord Charles Beresford) was there, and to which certain papers of his were submitted embodying a scheme for reducing the number of non-combatants in the Fleet, had reported? That question was one which he considered to be most important, owing to the great change in the character of our ships which had taken place of late years, and which had led to an increase in the number of non-combatants from 17 per cent to 41 per cent in some ships, and he thought some steps should be taken, not only to reduce the number of non-combatants, but to make those who remained more efficient. There were about 3,500 working idlers, as they were called, and about 3,900 excused idlers in the Navy; and when it was borne in mind that the French Fleet had only 7 per cent of non-combatants, as against our average of 22 per cent, and one-fifth more men in the ships, the question appeared to be of such importance that it must be very soon settled in a decisive way. One effect of the system was this—that in a vessel of the *Thunderer* class, for instance, the bursting of a one-pound shell in the turret might kill a whole gun's crew, and it would not be possible to replace them. The distinction between working idlers and excused idlers was one which existed in old times, and was still preserved in the Navy; the former were men who came on deck when the hands were turned up; the latter were those who did not come on deck. On board a man-of-war the working idlers consisted of the plumber, painter, armourer, cooper, shipwright, blacksmith, torpedo artificer, the crews attached to torpedoes, the lamp trimmer, &c. His view was that every one of these men could be made a fireman, if only their pay was slightly increased for doing fireman's work. The carpenter, who was of no use at all in modern ships, should be done away with; what they wanted was to have in the ships seamen, firemen, and some excused idlers, and to get rid of the working idlers altogether. By this plan there would be increased power of keeping the engines going, because there would be more men to work the fires. Then he would have one mechanical staff in the ship in place of the present two; he would put this part under one mechanical head, who should be under the chief engineer, and instead of the carpenter there should be a mechanician who should also be a warrant officer. There would then be the whole of the six rates exactly as at present in the engine-room department. His theory was that, whereas formerly there were seamen and gunners, there must now, in view of the changes which had taken place, be seamen, gunners, and engineers, and he thought that the time of every cadet who joined the Navy now should be devoted to learning in these three branches. He was aware that some brother officers differed from him, and it was thought that if his suggestions were adopted the engineers would get too much power; but that was exactly what he believed would happen if they were not adopted. Then there was another class of non-combatants that he wanted to see abolished — namely, the third-class domestics. These had crept into the Service since our ship's companies had been reduced, because in old days the second-class boys took this position, and the second-class boy was eventually drafted on to the fighting strength of the Fleet. This domestic class, whose pay was 1*s.* 1*d.* a-day, was of no use whatever for fighting; and his opinion was that there were plenty of men in the ships who would do that work if they had half that amount of pay given them in addition to their own. In that way there would be useful men in case the ship went into action in place of lads who, in those circumstances, were of little or of no use for anything. This was his proposal, in which, although there were, no doubt, some points open to be argued against, he thought there was a great deal of good. The point was one which he had brought forward a long time ago, and which had been referred to a Committee. He did not know what had been done in the matter; but it was one that ought to be taken up, because it came into the general question of the fighting organization of the Fleet. He maintained that it was proved to a certainty that we had really no good system of organization for war at the present moment; for if they had, all this detail with which the Committee had been dealing would have been thought out and threshed out. He did not blame his late Colleagues at all; it was the system; but these things were intimately connected with success or failure in action. He hoped the noble Lord would say whether anything was being done in the direction he had indicated, and he now begged to move the reduction of the Vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £3,112,600, be granted for the said Services."—(*Lord Charles Beresford.*)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): My noble Friend has called attention to a most important question, but, at the same time, one which is of a highly technical character. It is not one which I can deal with in the House of Commons, but it is a question which I think my noble Friend is perfectly right in raising. The introduction of machinery of all kinds, which has superseded manual labour, has largely increased the engine-room complements, and thus the number of non-combatants form a larger proportion to the crews of our vessels than was the case in former times. I am aware that my noble Friend has given considerable attention to this question. The last proposal which he made was of a very detailed character, and it was referred to a Committee. My noble Friend thinks that what this Committee was appointed to do could be done within the Admiralty itself, if a certain number of officers had been added to the Civil Staff. I would point out that this would cost a great deal of money, because a number of officers would have to be put on full pay; but how much more would it cost the country if these officers were to be put permanently on full pay?

Lord CHARLES BERESFORD: What I meant was that if we had naval officers instead of civilians, this question could have been turned over to them, and that the naval officers' pay would be less than the civilian pay.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: I do not agree with my noble Friend that in any system of organization it is possible to take away so large a portion of the working power in an office as would be required to deal with so large a question as the reduction of the non-combatant class. My noble Friend drew up a Report, and this was submitted to an Arrangement Committee. That Committee have reported, and their Report is now under consideration. I think everyone will agree that the non-combatant class could be reduced to the smallest dimensions possible; but they are two classes, one of which has to be put to small arms drill, and the other cannot be put to any training at all. The latter I think, of course, ought to be reduced to the smallest possible dimensions. But then there will be some work for the non-combatants in time of action, such as looking after ammunition and the wounded, and putting out fire caused by shell. There is a very strong opinion against reducing the number of non-combatants to the extent mentioned by the noble Lord. The executive officers are of opinion that this would diminish their authority, and I am bound to say that I think they are right in their contention. I can only say, in conclusion, that the Report is being considered by the Board of Admiralty; but there are a very large number of points to be dealt with. We shall try to come to a conclusion as soon as possible, and certainly one of the points which will exercise them, would be that of the noble Lord for the reduction of the non-combatants to the lowest possible figure.

Mr. R. W. DUFF (Banffshire) said, that Members on that side of the House made no objection to the Vote being taken, on the understanding that any question relating to the number of men could be raised on Vote 2.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: I am perfectly willing to accede to the proposal of the hon. Gentleman.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

CIVIL SERVICES.

(3.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a sum, not exceeding £3,614,903, be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charge for the following Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March 1889," viz.:—

Class I.—Public Works and Buildings.

Great Britain :—	£
Royal Palaces	5,000
Marlborough House	500
Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens ..	12,000
Houses of Parliament	6,000
Gordon Monument	- -
Public Buildings	20,000
Admiralty, Extension of Buildings ..	800
Furniture of Public Offices.. ..	3,000
Revenue Department Buildings ..	35,000
County Court Buildings	5,000
Metropolitan Police Courts.. ..	3,000
Sheriff Court Houses, Scotland ..	5,000
Surveys of the United Kingdom ..	40,000
Science and Art Department Buildings	2,000
British Museum Buildings	2,000
Edinburgh University Buildings ..	- -
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings ..	3,000
Harbours, &c. under Board of Trade..	2,000
Lighthouses Abroad	1,000
Peterhead Harbour	1,000
Rates on Government Property (Great Britain and Ireland)	80,000
Metropolitan Fire Brigade.. ..	2,500
Disturnpiked and Main Roads (England and Wales)	10,000
Disturnpiked Roads (Scotland) ..	5,000
Ireland :—	
Public Buildings	35,000
Science and Art Buildings, Dublin ..	7,000

Class II.—Salaries and Expenses of Civil Departments.

England :—	
House of Lords, Offices	6,000
House of Commons, Offices ..	6,000

	£
Treasury, including Parliamentary Counsel	10,000
Home Office and Subordinate Departments	15,000
Foreign Office	10,000
Colonial Office	6,000
Privy Council Office and Subordinate Departments	7,000
Board of Trade and Subordinate Departments	20,000
Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade	3
Charity Commission (including Endowed Schools Department)	6,000
Civil Service Commission	9,000
Exchequer and Audit Department	9,000
Friendly Societies, Registry	1,500
Land Commission for England	2,000
Local Government Board	40,000
Lunacy Commission	2,000
Mint (including Coinage)	20,000
National Debt Office	2,500
Patent Office	9,000
Paymaster General's Office	4,500
Public Works Loan Commission	1,500
Record Office	4,000
Registrar General's Office	8,000
Stationery Office and Printing	£70,000
Woods, Forests, &c. Office of	6,000
Works and Public Buildings, Office of	8,000
Mercantile Marine Fund, Grant in Aid	15,000
Secret Service	8,000

Scotland:—

Secretary for Scotland	2,000
Exchequer and other Offices	500
Fishery Board	3,000
Lunacy Commission	1,000
Registrar General's Office	1,000
Board of Supervision	3,000

Ireland:—

Lord Lieutenant's Household	1,000
Chief Secretary's Office	6,500
Charitable Donations and Bequests Office	300
Local Government Board	15,000
Public Works Office	10,000
Record Office	1,000
Registrar General's Office	3,000
Valuation and Boundary Survey	4,500

CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE.

England:—

Law Charges	12,000
Criminal Prosecutions	30,000
Supreme Court of Judicature	65,000
Wreck Commission	2,000
County Courts	20,000
Land Registry	1,000
Revising Barristers, England	- -
Police Courts (London and Sheerness)	3,000
Metropolitan Police	125,000
Special Police	9,000
County and Borough Police, Great Britain	1,000
Prisons, England and the Colonies	120,000
Reformatory and Industrial Schools, Great Britain	80,000
Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum	6,000

Scotland:—	£
Lord Advocate and Criminal Proceedings	10,000
Courts of Law and Justice	5,000
Register House Departments	6,000
Crofters Commission	1,000
Police, Counties and Burghs (Scotland)	1,000
Prisons, Scotland	15,000

Ireland:—

Law Charges and Criminal Prosecutions	15,000
Supreme Court of Judicature	12,000
Court of Bankruptcy	1,500
Admiralty Court Registry	200
Registry of Deeds	3,000
Registry of Judgments	400
Land Commission	20,000
County Court Officers, &c.	18,000
Dublin Metropolitan Police (including Police Courts)	30,000
Constabulary	250,000
Prisons, Ireland	20,000
Reformatory and Industrial Schools	25,000
Dundrum Criminal Lunatic Asylum	1,500

CLASS IV.—EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND ART.

England:—

Public Education	640,000
Science and Art Department	40,000
British Museum	25,000
National Gallery	2,500
National Portrait Gallery	400
Learned Societies, &c.	6,500
London University	2,000
Universities and Colleges (Grants in Aid)	1,000
Deep Sea Exploring Expedition (Report)	500

Scotland:—

Public Education	140,000
Universities, &c.	2,000
National Gallery	400

Ireland:—

Public Education	200,000
Teachers' Pension Office	500
Endowed Schools Commissioners	200
National Gallery	300
Queen's Colleges	500
Royal Irish Academy	100

CLASS V.—FOREIGN AND COLONIAL SERVICES.

	£
Diplomatic Services	50,000
Consular Services	40,000
Slave Trade Services	4,000
Suez Canal (British Directors)	400
Colonies, Grants in Aid	8,000
South Africa and St. Helena	8,000
Subsidies to Telegraph Companies	14,000
Cyprus, Grant in Aid	- -

CLASS VI.—NON-EFFECTIVE AND CHARITABLE SERVICES.

Superannuation and Retired Allowances	120,000
Merchant Seamen's Fund Pensions, &c.	1,000

Pauper Lunatics, England	- -
Pauper Lunatics, Scotland.. ..	- -
Pauper Lunatics, Ireland	60,000
Hospitals and Infirmaries, Ireland ..	3,000
Savings Banks and Friendly Societies Deficiency	- -
Miscellaneous Charitable and other Allowances, Great Britain ..	500
Miscellaneous Charitable and other Allowances, Ireland	600

CLASS VII.—MISCELLANEOUS.

Temporary Commissions	8,000
Miscellaneous Expenses	4,000
Public Works and Industries, Ireland	6,000
Repayment of Kilrush and Kilkee Railway Deposit	3,300
Total for Civil Services..	£2,944,903

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

Customs	100,000
Inland Revenue	100,000
Post Office	100,000
Post Office Packet Service	20,000
Post Office Telegraphs	350,000
Total for Revenue Departments	£670,000
Grand Total ..	£3,614,903

MR. T. P. GILL (Louth, S.) said, he had to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland for some information with regard to the case of a man who had been dismissed from the position which he held as doctor at a dispensary in Ireland, in consequence of his having been sentenced under the Coercion Act for a speech delivered by him at meeting of the National League. Dr. Magner, the person to whom he referred, was sentenced by the Recorder of Cork. He was asked, at the time, if he would give a certain undertaking not to repeat his offence; but on his refusing to do so he was sentenced to two months' imprisonment. A letter was sent from the Local Government Board refusing to sanction the election of Dr. Magner, and a few days after the receipt of that letter he was dismissed by the Guardians from the dispensary position which he had been holding all along, the reason given that he had been committed to prison under the Crimes Act. The hardship of the case was very great indeed, because Dr. Magner was a young practitioner at the outset of his career; he was most popular in the district, as was proved by the fact that he had been elected to two dispensary positions, and he had been sent to prison because he proposed a resolution at a meeting which, in England or in any part of Ireland which was not proclaimed, would have been perfectly lawful. But the Government were not content with that; they had since pursued him into his professional career, and while he was in prison dismissed him from his situation. He hoped the Chief Secretary for Ireland would agree with him in thinking that the Government had pursued this gentleman a little too far, and that there was an element of vindictiveness in this straining on the part of the Local Government Board to inflict punishment on a man in Dr. Magner's position. He did not think it had been contemplated by the Chief Secretary for Ireland to impose penalties to this extent. He thought that when a man had suffered punishment under the Act for an offence of the kind which Dr. Magner had committed it ought to be sufficient. But to ruin his professional career, to deprive him of his living, and to put a stigma upon him which would ever after prevent him from holding a similar appointment in Ireland, and one which would compel him to go beyond the British Dominions to escape from its effect, was, he thought, a most unjustifiable proceeding. Possibly that had been done because it had not come under the direct supervision of the right hon. Gentleman, and he would ask him to say that, if the facts were as he (Mr. Gill) had stated, he, for one, did not wish that Dr. Magner, having been punished, should be still further pursued by the Local Government Board.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): The hon. Member for Louth has alluded to the Local Government Board as having pursued Dr. Magner with vindictiveness, with the intention of ruining his professional career. It seems to me, however, that there is no foundation at all for that charge. Dr. Magner was found guilty of an offence under the Crimes Act and sentenced to imprisonment; he appealed against the sentence, and the Judge who heard the appeal confirmed it, but gave Dr. Magner, as I understand, an opportunity of undertaking that he would not again commit the offence with which he was charged. This undertaking Dr. Magner refused to give, and it would therefore appear that he was not acting under any casual impulse, but had deliberately broken the law. The question arose, what action should be taken by the Local Government Board with regard to the appointment that Dr. Magner held? It has always been the practice, and, in my opinion, ought to continue to be the practice, of the Local Government Board to dismiss any of its servants who had been convicted of an offence against the law. That principle they applied to the appointment which Dr. Magner held. It appears to me that the Local Government Board simply carried out the duties laid upon them by Parliament. The hon. Gentleman says that the professional career of Dr. Magner has been ruined; I trust, however, that that will not be found to be the case. I wish to point out that the Local Government Board could not do otherwise than they have done; and, secondly, that their action is not likely to entail that professional ruin which the hon. Member for Louth seems to imagine.

Mr. J. S. O'CONNOR (Tipperary) said, he was sorry to hear the right hon. Gentleman say that Dr. Magner had indulged in a persistent attempt to break the law. This gentleman was a young doctor at the outset of his professional career, and he had attended a meeting of the National League, at which he brought upon himself, by the unfortunate speech, which he made, all this punishment. He could not have had any deliberate intention of breaking the law, because at the time that was a new law in Ireland. Dr. Magner was asked to give an undertaking that he would not persist in making speeches in connection with the National League. It was, therefore, not enough for the Local Government Board to ruin Dr. Magner by depriving him of employment, but there was an intention to dishonour him. The right hon. Gentleman had said it would be no detriment to Dr. Magner in his practice that he had been deprived of his position. But there, again, the right hon. Gentleman showed his ignorance of society in Ireland, because he would otherwise know that a young doctor always sought for some permanent employment which would afford him a salary while he was working up that practice which, as the right hon. Gentleman said, attached to all eminent men. But Dr. Magner had had no time to work up that professional career, and attach to himself a circle of patients which would enable him to bid defiance to the action of the right hon. Gentleman, and enable him to give up his appointment. Therefore it was that this action on the part of the Local Government Board must have the effect of ruining Dr. Magner, who might have to seek in another country, where he was not so well known, for that employment of which the action of the Local Government Board, at whose head was the right hon. Gentleman, had deprived him. One would have thought that having been punished for the offence with which he was charged, Dr. Magner might, for the full benefit of his profession, be restored to citizenship, and that he might be allowed to do what, in fact, had been permitted in the case of others who had purged themselves from their offences. But no; the Local Government Board, with the right hon. Gentleman at its head, would extend to Dr. Magner no mercy. The right hon. Gentleman, however, was pursuing a course which his Predecessors had not followed in like circumstances. He (Mr. O'Connor) remembered that under the operation of the old Coercion Act of 1881, Dr. Kenny was deprived of his appointment as physician to the Dublin Board of Guardians, but that some time afterwards he was restored to his functions; and he said that, in like manner, Dr. Magner, who had been deprived by the Local Government Board, should also be reinstated. But the right hon. Gentleman would not restore Dr. Magner to his functions or to the privileges of citizenship — he had taken such a course as would deprive him of his daily bread, not because he had committed an offence of intimidating two or three people, but because he was the political opponent of the right hon. Gentleman. He could not accept the statement of the right hon. Gentleman that the Board had sympathy with the patients of Dr. Magner during his imprisonment. It ought to be known to the right hon. Gentleman that, pending the time during which Dr. Magner was undergoing his sentence, the Board of Guardians had appointed another physician, and were prepared to pay him if he would take a salary of them, although he was quite willing to perform the duties of Dr.

Magner while he was in prison for nothing. This young man, not knowing the force of the law, had, by an indiscreet speech, brought himself within its meshes; he was in prison, and for five days during that time was kept on bread and water; he came out of prison emaciated, and yet this was not sufficient for the Local Government Board and the right hon. Gentleman, for he had been deprived of his livelihood, and his professional career was blasted; all the education heaped upon him by his parents had been thrown away, and all because he had made a speech of which the right hon. Gentleman disapproved. That was the action which earned for the right hon. Gentleman and the Government, who were the promoters of the Coercion Act, the everlasting contempt of the Irish people. He trusted the right hon. Gentleman would reconsider this matter in the light of the precedents on which he could fall back. The case of Dr. Magner had aroused in the breasts of the people of Ireland great sympathy with the man himself, and he thought the right hon. Gentleman would do well to reconsider his determination in this matter by the time they had an opportunity of bringing the subject again before the Committee upon the Estimates.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.) said, he wished to make an appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland. He had heard a good deal about Dr. Magner, although he was not personally acquainted with him. Representations had reached him to the effect that Dr. Magner was a young man of unimpeachable character, this being his first fault, but that he had been unwisely induced at a meeting of the National League to move a resolution. Dr. Magner had not, as far as he was aware, taken any part before in the National League movement, and he was not, he believed, a strong partizan, although, in common with the young men in the district, he belonged to the Party in favour of the National movement. He had been proceeded against under the Crimes Act and been punished, and certainly, to his mind, it seemed that the language used by the Judge who sentenced him did not imply that he was a very hardened sinner. He would appeal to the right hon. Gentleman not to give a final answer at this moment, but to consider the propriety of again allowing Dr. Magner to resume his position at the dispensary, if the statement with regard to him were found to be true. He did not put this appeal on the ground of right or on the ground of policy, but upon the principle of extending leniency to a public officer, who had been already severely punished for the commission of a first offence.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not know how many offences involving two months' imprisonment the right hon. Gentleman opposite thinks ought to be committed before the Local Government Board take notice of the matter; but, as far as I know, I should only be misleading the right hon. Gentleman if I were to hold out any hope whatever that I should reconsider this case. I will examine the facts, but I do not hold out the slightest expectation that the action which the Local Government Board very reluctantly took will be reversed.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.) said, he desired to draw attention to the fact that an appeal had been made by a prominent Member of the late Government (Mr. Childers) to the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour), which one would have supposed would meet with some attention. The right hon. Gentleman, in that appeal, sought to forestall the impetuous action of the Chief Secretary in saying "No" to everything of the kind that related to Ireland. He had not pressed the Chief Secretary, but immediately the right hon. Gentleman sat down they had from him his *non possumus;* but, in spite of that, he could assure him that the people of Ireland before then had even in a matter of this kind proved that they were not powerless, and had carried their point against the Government. They would do so in this instance, and he believed that Dr. Magner would be in his position when the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland was not on the Ministerial Bench. The right hon. Gentleman affected not to know the name of this doctor; but it was strange to say that twice before in that House, and frequently in Irish journals, this charge had been made, and the Chief Secretary was himself present at the meeting of the Local Government Board in Dublin when Dr.

Magner was dismissed. Under the circumstances, it was strange that the right hon. Gentleman was at a loss as to Dr. Magner's name. It would be in the recollection of the House that the hon. Member for East Cork (Mr. Lane) got a month's imprisonment for inciting certain tenants to adopt the Plan of Campaign. In this case the District Inspector went to a Dr. Hays and asked him if he would prosecute the hon. Member. Dr. Hays said he was not intimidated, and that he did not see any harm in the Plan of Campaign. He (Mr. Edward Harrington) asserted that the general belief in the district in which he lived was that because Dr. Hays gave this approval of the Plan of Campaign the Local Government Board refused him the increase of salary which was warranted by all the circumstances. While this belief existed in the minds of the people, he thought something more ought to be done by Her Majesty's Ministers than to make flippant and casual utterances at the Table of the House, which were as much as to say that Irish Members were not worthy of belief. Passing to another matter, he said that in Tralee at the present time there was a Mr. M'Gillicuddy, known as the Sessional Crown Prosecutor, whose duty it was to take to a higher tribunal cases brought under the ordinary law or the exceptional law in Ireland. Against this gentleman he wished it to be understood that he made no personal charge. This gentleman and his first cousin, Mr. Morphy, held a set of offices in common—they sat at the same table. Mr. M'Gillicuddy initiated all prosecutions, from an action for the sale of *United Ireland* down to a prosecution for murder. Mr. Morphy, owing to the press of business now existing, assisted in these prosecutions, and virtually conducted them. One day he would be engaged in a case against a newsvendor, and the next he would be engaged in defending a Moonlighter, while his cousin, the Sessional Prosecutor, was prosecuting cases at the Petty Sessions Court.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir EDWARD CLARKE) (Plymouth): Why not?

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON said, he should rather ask why this should be. He knew that people came many miles to Mr. Morphy to get him to defend in their cases, because they believed that they would get off in that way. There was the case of Harrel, who was charged with murder in Cork. He should be sorry to say that the evidence against him was strong; but the Crown thought it was, and bail was refused, and he was kept in prison for some months. The man was discharged, and the belief in the County of Kerry was that he would not have been discharged were it not that the solicitor representing him at the Cork Assizes was Mr. Morphy, the first cousin of the Crown Prosecutor. The hon. and learned Solicitor General for England who asked "Why not?" should remember that these two gentlemen occupied the same rooms, and that the depositions taken by the Crown Prosecutor were before the solicitor for the defence. When confidential information came into the office of the Crown Prosecutor the ears of the defending solicitor would be opened to it also. He asked if it was decent that in the County of Kerry, where 150,000 people had been evicted since evictions commenced, these inflammatory elements should be added when an easy remedy could be found? He believed these men were as honourable as any other solicitors; he made no charge against them; but, as a Member for the county and one who had had to face charges of complicity and tacit assent to crimes committed in Ireland, he said it was his duty to call attention to these facts in order to see if a remedy could be found. This matter was notorious in the county. No one would deny that whenever a Moonlighter was taken up the first thing Mr. Morphy would do would be to see his first cousin, the Crown Prosecutor, who occupied the same rooms with himself. Would anyone say that in England, where there was absolute confidence in the administration of the law, any instance parallel to this could be found? He asked the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General to say something on this subject, which certainly called for some comment.

SIR EDWARD CLARKE said, as an appeal had been made to him he should like to say a word or two on the story which had been laid before the Committee, a story which he had heard before, and which had been repeated in detail on the present occasion. He thought there was nothing whatever in the complaint which was made as to these two gentlemen. He hoped the hon. Member opposite would not think that he was particularly attached to legal subtleties or legal etiquette in a matter of this kind. Hon. Members on that side of the House knew that in the discussion of some other matters in which they were interested, he had taken a line which he should take now if he thought it necessary for the cause of justice, without the slightest hesitation. The hon. Member, said that these two gentlemen were cousins; that one was the Crown Prosecutor, and that the other practised at the Court; that they had the same rooms. He did not know whether there was only one table in the room, but the hon. Member opposite said they used the same table; and the result was taken to be that they both saw the depositions which were to be used in the cases in which one prosecuted and the other defended; but, of course, there was no advantage to either side in seeing the depositions. Then it was suggested that confidential communications made to the Crown Prosecutor were handed to the cousin who was about to defend the prisoner, and that the confidential statements made on behalf of the prisoner might be handed to the Crown Prosecutor. But there was no reason to suppose that confidential communications were revealed on either side, for any personal charge was expressly disavowed, and, if so, there was no possible harm in these gentlemen occupying the same rooms. In the Temple it often happened that the counsel in the same chambers were employed on opposite sides in a case, and there was no reason to suppose that confidential matters were communicated to each other. These were the remarks he had to make, and he should not have risen had not the hon. Member made an appeal to him.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON said, the great point which he wished to impress on the Committee was, that the gentleman who was first cousin to the Crown Prosecutor and used the same table was employed invariably in the prosecution of such crimes as he (Mr. Edward Harrington) had been guilty of—that was to say, offences in connection with the Press, which hon. Members on that side called frivolous prosecutions of a political aspect. But most usually this gentleman was employed for the defence of Moonlighters and those accused of murder. His point was not so much what might happen between these two men. He would rather hear the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, or someone responsible for the administration, state what they considered to be the effect on the minds of the people who saw the same men prosecuting in a Press offence and defending in a case of murder.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) said, the remarks he had to make were rather of a financial character, and therefore lay rather with the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) than with legal Gentlemen opposite. He thought it would be admitted by everyone that in the present circumstances of Ireland there was nothing to which the Government should address itself more than to watching the character and capacity of those who were appointed to the very responsible position of Assistant Land Commissioners. He hoped the Government would give their minds seriously to that matter. There was at the present moment very great doubt in the minds of those who were well-informed on the subject as to the qualifications of those who had been recently appointed to the position of Assistant Commissioner. He was bound to say that what had taken place was not qualified to enforce the conviction that the Government carried things with an even hand with regard to the Land Commission. He thought that officials connected with the Commission ought not to be allowed to go on political platforms. His next point was on the very curious way on which these Votes were placed on the Estimates of the year. They were asked to vote a sum of £45,912 this year for the Land Commission. Last year the original figures were £62,452, to which must be added the supplementary sum of £37,575, making for the year 1887-8 the total of £100,028. The sum of £45,912 was deducted from that in the Estimate, and the expression was used that the sum of £54,116 resulting from the subtraction was "a net decrease" to that extent as between 1887-8 and 1888-9. Of course, the £54,116 showed a decrease in the Civil Service Estimates for the year 1888-9 as compared with 1887-8, and it swelled the total decrease to that extent. He asked whether the £45,912 put down for 1888-9 was all that they would have to vote, or would it be followed by a large Supplementary Estimate? [Mr. Jackson: No.] He, of course, understood that the Vote was only for the period up to 22nd August, when, in default of other arrangements, the Land Commission expired. But in these cases surely like should be compared with like, and an explanation given that the £100,000 was for 12 months, and the £45,000 only for five months. But they were not comparing like figures with like figures, and to the extent shown the apparent saving was fictitious, using that word in a sense which the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury would understand. He failed to understand the answer of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury to the hon. and learned Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy) earlier in the evening. It appeared on the face of the figures that there had been a reduction in the number of Sub-Commissioners, and he ventured to say that this was not a time when such a reduction ought to be made. The grievances of the Irish occupiers of holdings were too serious and too numerous to admit of anything of that kind. There were not only proceedings under the Act of 1881, but if the Act of 1887 was to be worth anything the Courts would be full of applications, and were becoming so now as a matter of fact under the latter Act; and, therefore, so far from weakening the Land Commission, he submitted that it should be strengthened in every possible way. An answer was given the other day to the hon. Member for Kildare (Mr. Carew) which struck him as remarkable. The hon. Member was told that whereas the last sitting of the Land Commission in Kildare was in September the next sitting would not place before next June. This meant that the unfortunate occupiers were to pay abnormal rents without relief until that time. Meantime the action of the landlords was most significant. Even the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) had been proceeding somewhat harshly against a poor old woman; and his soilcitor said he was not instructed to take any other course than he had taken—

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY for IRELAND (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) said, he begged the hon. Gentleman's pardon for interrupting him. The rent had been reduced by 60 per cent.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS: The words of the Judge were—

> "Surely you will not proceed against this old woman for the rent which has been judicially reduced 60 per cent."

The only way to stop this sort of thing was to strengthen the Land Commission, to increase the sittings of the Court and bring up the arrears of the Commission; and that was a point he would press most strongly on the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury. There was another point upon which he wished to say a word or two in reference to the Land Commission. He wished to utter a clear note of warning on this question, which was looming in the distance, of Irish land purchase. The Report of the Irish Land Commission contained some very striking sentences on this subject. On page 6 of their Report for the year ending 22nd August, 1887, they remarked—

> "In the Church property branch of the Commission we have again to report that the collection of revenue has been unsatisfactory. . . . The arrears due at March 31, 1887, were more by £47,787 than on March 31, 1887."

They further declared the security upon which large advances of public money were being made was diminishing. Though these statements in the Report to which he referred dealt simply with the Irish Church branch of the work of the Commissioners, it applied also to the land purchase portion of their proceedings. Practically, £4,000,000 odd of public money had been advanced through the Commission; and if the process to which he drew attention went on and the security diminished in value, arrears increasing relatively to the instalments as they become due, the prospect was very far from a cheering one. The House would have an opportunity of going more fully into this subject when the Government brought in their measure for creating a large number of peasant proprietors in Ireland. He had alluded to the matter thus early because he was one of those who were resolved resolutely set their faces against further legislative proposals in the direction of Lord Ashbourne's Act, holding, as he did, that the only sound policy for bringing to bear the guarantees of the State in such operations was, that they should be allied with some form of Representative Assembly in Dublin, which would command the confidence of those by whom the money was to be repaid. It seemed to him that, so far as the Government policy at the present moment went, it was a most disastrous one on these Irish agrarian matters. So far as he could understand it, the Government were not helping the operation of the Act of 1881 for a very good reason. The Prime Minister had characterized that Act as one of the two downward steps in public financial morality which had been taken during the depression of the last 10 years. They could not wonder, then, at the Government wishing more or less to paralyze that Act of 1881. He (Mr. J. E. Ellis) must respectfully protest against this policy. The Government seemed to be pursuing the same course with regard to the Act of 1887, because by delaying the sittings of the Sub-Commissioners they withheld from occupying tenants the opportunities that were promised to them by the Ministry when the Bill was passed last year. He hoped he had put his points clearly before the Secretary to the Treasury, and that some of them might be cleared up by that hon Gentleman.

The SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.) said, that he thought if the hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. E. Ellis) had looked at the Estimate he would have found it there distinctly stated that the Estimate was one of the amount required between the 1st of April and the 22nd of August, 1888. He believed it would be quite contrary to precedent and quite unusual for the Government to have made provision for a service which was not sanctioned, and he held that it was entirely in accordance with the ordinary practice of the Treasury in a case like this, where a Commission came to an end—that is to say, when an Act expired—not to have made provision for any longer period. The hon. Member, in a good-natured way, seemed to imply that he (Mr. Jackson) had taken credit for this as being an increase, and asked whether this was all the House would have to vote for the coming year. Well, it was all they would have to vote for the coming year, unless Parliament extended the Act or made some new provision. The hon. Member would see until that provision was made or until the present Act was extended it would be quite impossible to enter the amount of expenditure which would have to be provided for. With regard to the number of Commissioners, he (Mr. Jackson) had on a former occasion endeavoured to explain what, perhaps, the hon. Member would remember—namely, that the number taken on the Estimate for 1887-8 was the number originally provided, supplemented by the number contained in the Supplementary Estimate, and the explanation of that was very simple. He hoped he might make it clear. Towards the end of the year, or, at any rate, beyond the middle of the year, they received an application for a considerable number of additional Sub-Commissioners. At that time the number which would be required was necessarily very conjectural.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): What month was that in?

MR. JACKSON said, he spoke on this matter subject to correction; but he was under the impression that it was in the month of August. The Government were at that time, of course, quite without experience as to the amount of work which might come before the Sub-Commissioners; but, being desirous to meet all requirements, they sanctioned the full number included in the application, and that number appeared on the Estimate for last year. As a matter of fact, however, the total number sanctioned by the Government and provided for in the Estimate was not appointed, and had not been appointed up to the present time.

MR. J. E. ELLIS: Was not the money paid?

MR. JACKSON: Certainly not.

MR. J. E. ELLIS: Then how can the accounts show a saving by comparing two sums, one of which was imaginary?

MR. JACKSON said, he did not know that. Hon. Members would see from the Memorandum that he did not seek to take credit in any sense for any saving, but had only endeavoured to make it clear what was the cause of the decrease. When, towards the end of the year—in December last—it became his (Mr. Jackson's) duty to supervise the Estimates which were prepared for presentation to Parliament, it was part of that duty to visit Dublin and go through the Estimates generally with all the Departments in Ireland. In conference with the Land Commissioners, it was agreed that they should make provision for 65 Sub-Commissioners, 50 being, as he believed, the existing number, with the distinct understanding, as he had already observed, that if a further number was necessary the Government would sanction an addition, as there was no desire to delay or obstruct the business which the Sub-Commissioners were doing. He hoped he should have the approval of hon. Gentlemen in saying that, as a matter of procedure, his experience taught him that it was wise always to obtain the guidance of a little experience rather than to make too large a provision in the first place for work which might never arise.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) said, he was glad to hear this explanation from the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury. He thought the Government had acted very wisely in deciding that the staff of Sub-Commissioners for carrying out these Acts should not be stinted. He did not agree with the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Rushcliffe Division of Nottingham (Mr. J. E. Ellis) in thinking that the course the Government were pursuing in the matter was disastrous. He thought the Government were pursuing the right course, and that if they carried it out their conduct would be worthy of commendation. He did not say that their action was right in all its details; he thought, for instance, that what was done in regard to the revision of rents was done in a very rough way, and it still remained to be discovered by experience whether it contained the elements of success; but, speaking generally, he had always thought that the Government had adopted the right principle. Though they had grumbled at the Act of 1881, and though he thought they were unwise in throwing dirt at it, still he gathered that they had accepted it and were carrying it out. He only rose to say that he hoped the Government would carry out the system properly. He thought it utterly out of place to talk about what the Government had done being a matter of contract or breach of contract—it was a matter of State intervention for the settlement of a question existing as to the rights of two co-owners in the land——

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I must point out that the hon. Member is travelling very wide of the Question before the Committee.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL said, he begged pardon—he did not understand what the subject was. He had been speaking with reference to the observations of the hon. Gentleman behind him (Mr. J. E. Ellis), and had fancied that he had not gone beyond those observations. However, he had said all he desired to say. He would only remark that he shared with the hon. Member great apprehension lest any large scheme of purchase introduced by the Government should lead to difficulties and disturb the right and sound course which they were following.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) said, the hon. Gentleman the Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) would have done wisely if he had refrained from praising the action of the Government until he had learned a little more about it. He (Mr. T. M. Healy) had a distinct recollection of the action of the hon. Member in 1881 and 1887, and he was sorry to say that that recollection was not one of gratitude to him for the part he had taken in the passage of the measures of those years. Be that as it might, he was bound to say at the present moment the hon. Member was premature in praising the Government for what they had done. He (Mr. T. M. Healy) quite agreed that the explanation of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) was a candid one, and satisfactory so far as the hon. Member himself was concerned. He entirely acquitted the hon. Member of the least desire to stint the service of the Commissioners. The difference of the two Estimates had been satisfactorily explained; but, so far as the Executive of the Government of Ireland was concerned, he did not take that view. He had pressed the Government for an explanation, but had received no information as to what were the number of Sub-Commissioners appointed to carry out the Acts when the applications rose beyond the powers of the existing Commissioners. The House had not had that information, nor had they received the information which they desired to have as to who the men were. As long as they had the Land Act before them, he had got up and testified unfeignedly against the character of the men appointed for the administration of the Act. He had not on any occasion failed to protest against the character of the men appointed. He believed it was owing to the character of the men appointed in the past under the late Mr. Forster and the Government that succeeded him that the present agrarian crisis was due. With regard to the Commissioners who had been appointed by the present Government, he was willing to admit that they had got a severe scare owing to the fall in prices. What the Commissioners last appointed had done was clearly due to the scare which existed amongst them, for a more untrustworthy lot of gentlemen it would have been impossible to get even in the days of Mr. Forster. Mr. Forster was the man who killed the Act. It was to his Sub-Commissioners, and to the delight he took in appointing bad men, that they owed the trouble existing in Ireland at the present time. He (Mr. T. M. Healy) was quite free to admit that the action of some Commissioners appointed by right hon. Gentlemen opposite had been better; but, at the same time, he contended that these gentlemen had acted with the greatest stringency. Who were they? He would not go into the individual names and characters of the men; but he would say that if hon. Members would take the trouble to inquire who the men were, they would find that, almost without exception, they were drawn from the landlord class. However, even with regard to them, he would refrain from hasty criticism, preferring to wait another year, or perhaps to the month of July or August next, to see how they went on, before expressing a decided opinion as to their conduct. But that it was necessary that some consideration should be given to this question of the character of the Sub-Commissioners was clearly shown by circumstances which had already occurred. He would give an instance. Take the case of the action of a Sub-Commissioner upon an estate where, above all others, the Sub-Commissioner should have been most cautious, and should have done his best to avoid offending the susceptibilities of the tenantry—namely, on the Kingston estate. There the tenantry had almost unanimously adopted the Plan of Campaign, and at the sitting of the Court, which was very naturally crowded with the tenantry, on there being some demonstration, Mr. Doyle, the Sub-Commissioner, said to one of the barristers present—"These people are a pack of howling savages." That was a small thing of itself; but it showed the spirit which animated these men. Everything which they did in the interests of the tenantry was done grudgingly. The little technicalities, the bitter, rotten law points, which were raised from time to time, were always decided against the tenants. No doubt many of these points would be reversed on appeal; but the Sub-Commissioners knew perfectly well that the appeals could not be heard for a couple of years or so, and that, in the meantime, the tenantry would be liable to pay the full rent. And when the decision of the Sub-Commissioners on these matters of law was reversed on appeal what would happen? Why, the cases would go back to the Sub-Commissioners to be settled, and it would probably be five years before the fair rent was fixed. It was under circumstances such as these that they heard the encomiums of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy on the conduct of the Government and the Commissioners. To his (Mr. T. M. Healy's) mind, it was an appalling thing to see an hon. Member who took such a prominent part in opposing Amendments to the Land Acts brought forward by Members of the Irish Party now coming forward with his encomiums upon the action of the Executive and the Commissioners. He (Mr. T. M. Healy) thought the Government should devise some means to effect a speedy hearing of appeals on law points raised before the Sub-Commissioners. The Government might make some provision for expediting the hearing of these appeals in their Judicature Bill. At present the landlords had a great advantage in regard to one portion of the machinery of the Land Act. If a man listed a lease which could not be dismissed—a lease, say, for 99 years or for 200 years, and for domain or pasture land—the landlord could apply summarily to the Commission to have it dismissed. The landlord could always depend upon the exercise of summary jurisdiction upon a law point, whilst the tenant could not. He must say that, in his judgment, it was a most necessary reform in connection with the administration of the Land Acts that when a tenant's fair rent application was dismissed on a law point, as scores of them were every day dismissed on most frivolous and abominable grounds, there should be some means of summarily determining these points. The whole momentum and machinery of the Act was directed against the tenants. There was a remarkable difference between the administration of the Crofters' Act and the administration of the Irish Land Act. He had lately noticed that under the Crofters' Act an almost analogous question with reference to the tenant's improvements to that which had arisen in the case of "Adams *v.* Dunseath" which had come before the Court, and in Scotland the decision was in favour of the tenant. All these cases decided in the Court of Appeal in Ireland were decided by a majority of Tories. The present Court of Appeal in that country consisted almost entirely of Tories, and by the Appellate Jurisdiction Act they were prevented from coming to the House of Lords. The Irish tenantry were, therefore, at the mercy of people who, he might say, would be only swayed by prejudices. In his opinion, there ought to be an appeal in all these matters up to the masthead, and these appeals should be speedy. The tribunal should be above suspicion of being in favour of the landlord party. It was a remarkable thing that every time in England, where appeals were heard in the House of Lords, the decisions were given in favour of the tenants. The hon. Member for the Rushcliffe Division of Nottingham (Mr. J. E. Ellis) referred to this matter of land purchase. Now, he (Mr. T. M. Healy), at the time Lord Ashbourne's Act was passed, was to a considerable extent in favour of it; but he had now come to see that the view taken of the measure by Radical Members above the Gangway—though he had come to the decision with reluctance — had been the correct view; and he would tell the House why. They would find with regard to the £5,000,000 that they were giving away under Lord Ashbourne's Act before long that very large arrears would arise, for the reason that they were not getting the cream of the Irish tenants. They were only getting tenants whom he might describe as "bargain-driven." He desired emphatically to warn the Government as to the character of the tenantry purchasing under Lord Ashbourne's Act. They were getting the wastrels of the Irish tenantry. They were for the most part, notably in the case of Lord Waterford's estate, tenants who were hopelessly in arrear, and who purchased on the landlord's terms solely in order to escape eviction. They were persons who before long would most likely become a burden upon the taxpayer. He did not attach blame in this matter to the gentlemen at the head of the Land Purchase Commission. Mr. M'Carthy and Mr. Lynch had decided the point that there was no pressure, by danger of eviction, brought to bear upon the tenantry of the Marquess of Waterford—that the people had not purchased under threat; but he (Mr. T. M. Healy) was bound to say that, considering the indirect pressure brought to bear upon these gentlemen by the Under Secretary for Ireland, and men of his class, it would have been as much as their position would have been worth if they had decided these points in favour of the tenants. This, however, was a matter for the consideration of the English taxpayers, whom he warned, as one anxious for the settlement of the Irish agrarian question by purchase, that they were getting a bad bargain. He warned them that under the existing system they were not getting the good tenants, but only the bad tenants—only the men who were in arrear and who were practically broken by bad seasons. They were getting the squeezed oranges, and the men who were able to pay rents were holding back and waiting for better terms. Before long they would see the fruit of the pressure that was being brought on the tenants. He feared that the next Administration would have to face the problem which had to be met in the case of the tithes half-a-century ago, and probably the British taxpayer would be saddled with a loss of £3,000,000 of money. For his part, when next the Government demanded another £5,000,000 to recoup the Treasury under Lord Ashbourne's Act, he should give the proposal his strongest opposition unless a clause were inserted in the measure to the effects that sales should be forbidden to tenants who were in arrear with their rent or to whom a writ of ejectment had been delivered within six months. They were told that there were no arrears of rent under the Land Purchase Commission. The reason of that was very simple, and it was that the instalments had not yet begun to become due. The Land Purchase Act was only passed in 1885, and practically did not come into operation until 1886, and there had not been very many instalments of purchase money due, but, by and by, they would come down like snow-flakes, and as the tenant had not been a free agent purchasing on fair terms they would have before long a very nice mess to clear up in Dublin. The fact was that the landlords were making use of the system of State advances in order to obtain an equivalent for the rack rents they had formerly been in the habit of charging, and which were now rendered impossible by the Land Acts. When the Irish Secretary was below the Gangway on the opposite side of the House he was very emphatic in the language in which he reminded the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) of what had to be done in the case of the advances made in respect of tithes over half-a-century ago. He pointed out that the amount advanced had remained a debt to the Treasury for something like 60 years, and at the end of that period the Treasury had to wipe off the whole of it as a bad debt; and, as he (Mr. T. M. Healy) had said, they might find in the future, when the Liberal Administration came into Office, that in respect of the Land Purchase Scheme they had a debt of £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 to wipe off in consequence of the whole thing having been administered in favour of the landlords. With regard to another point—namely, the dismissal of cases which came before the Sub-Commissioners, he wished to point out that to some extent there was a kind of speciousness in the answer which had been given by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) when he said that the Land Commissioners did not dismiss cases on caretakers' notices, but only adjourned them. What he always wondered at in official circles was why they were afraid of the plain truth. He did not see why because a man held an official appointment he could not look at facts as they stood. It was said that these cases were only adjourned, and one would think by that, that what was meant was when an adjourned case came on again the tenant would be able to apply afresh; but what were the facts? He knew a tenant who had spent thousands on thousands on his holding—a tenant who at one time was in very considerable circumstances, his rent alone being £228 a-year, the value of the land £140 a-year, and the buildings on the land £21, and the man had erected all the buildings himself. He went into Court in December, and the landlord at once served him with a notice under Section 7, the man being at once turned into a caretaker. That was in the county of Louth. The contention of the Government was that in this case, as in others of a similar kind, there was not a dismissal but an adjournment; but the fact was this, that by the next time there would be a sitting of the Court in the county of Louth, this man's time for redemption would be up, and he would then be a caretaker without the right of going into Court—he would have no status at all. There was no machinery for extending the period of redemption under any of the Land Acts except under the section dealing with the case of sale. Under Section 7, if a man had a notice served on him, he was debarred from going into Court, as the adjournment of a case amounted to dismissal. If the Commissioners did not sit again in a county where they had held their Court until a period of two or three months had elapsed, there was no possibility of prolonging the period of redemption so as to have a case heard within the time during which a tenant could make good his claim. There had been some talk about this question of arrears. The Government had offered certain terms, and he (Mr. T. M. Healy) would deal with just one case, because the landlord who was interested happened to be a Member of the House, and would be able to defend himself. He would take the case of the widow who had been referred to some time ago, and deal with it in an historical spirit, and without any offence to the right hon. and gallant Gentleman concerned. The landlord was the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman), and the case was this. There was a woman whose rent was £15 8*s*. He would not say whether at one time that was or was not a fair rent, but at any rate it was reduced to £7. Now, fancy what the feelings of a person who had been paying £15 8*s*. a-year rent must be when reflecting on the fact that the landlord had the power, if he could not succeed in screwing this rent from him, of turning him out on the roadside—fancy what his feelings must be when he reflected on the fact that the rent which was considered a fair one by a Court of Law was only £7. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman had said that he had only proceeded for one-half year's arrears after the reduction was effected. Well that half-year would practically be a sum of nearly £8—the amount of that half-year was more than the entire amount of the woman's present year's rent. Now this Court consisted of sworn gentlemen——

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I beg the hon. Member's pardon. They are not sworn.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: The right hon. and gallant Gentleman ought to know, for he has appointed them.

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I have appointed none of them.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said, if they were not sworn he would withdraw the expression. At any rate, these nominees of the Government were supposed to be impartial, and they were appointed by the right hon. and gallant Gentleman's Government if they were not by himself. He did not know who the Sub-Commissioners were who reduced the rent. Perhaps the right hon. and gallant Gentleman knew, and could produce their names.

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I do not know them.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said, at any rate they were the right hon. and gallant Gentleman's creatures, and the Government paid them for what they did. They were like day labourers receiving daily wages. They got three guineas a-day, and were sent round to operate on the property of the tenants. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman said he offered to take half-a-year's rent, and he had said that he had offered the woman a reduction of 20 per cent. Well, he (Mr. T. M. Healy) should like to know whether the right hon. and gallant Gentleman considered it a reasonable and a fair thing that when, after hearing evidence, the Court, which was not supposed to be biassed, and if it was so was certainly not in favour of the tenant, solemnly decided that the old rent should be reduced by 60 per cent, that it was becoming of a Gentleman in his position, holding as he did an Office under which he might have been supposed to have respect for law and order, and looking as he did for respect for law and order from the people of Ireland, to offer only 20 per cent reduction when the Court had allowed 60 per cent? He (Mr. T. M. Healy) submitted that there was a great discrepancy between equity and fact in the right hon. and gallant Gentleman's action. This was one of the jokes of the present system. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman said that he had appealed against the decision of the Court, but that the appeal had not come on——.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I would point out that the conduct of a particular landlord cannot be called to account under any item in this Vote, and that, therefore, the hon. and learned Member's observations are irrelevant.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said, he would not pursue the matter; but he had merely desired to illustrate the difficulty of administering the Land Law in Ireland by referring to a particular case. If he was not relevant, he would not continue his observations. He had been dealing with the action of the Land Commissioners in the matter of caretakers' notices. In this case an appeal had been lodged——

Colonel KING-HARMAN said, that if it would be in Order for him to do so, he could give a full explanation of the matter referred to by the hon. and learned Member, but the Chairman's ruling would prevent him from making a reply.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said, he should be delighted to hear any reply the right hon. and gallant Gentleman should have to make. The only observation he would make on the matter he would put into a concrete form. He would merely draw attention to the hardship of the Act of 1887 by showing that if an appeal was lodged, it never could come on because there was no speedy method under Section 7 by which the case of a person who was turned into a caretaker could be considered before the period within which redemption must be effected elapsed. Before the appeals could be heard there ceased to be anyone to appeal. He submitted, under these circumstances, that the Government ought to institute a means by which these appeals could be speedily dealt with. He contended that the speedy hearing of appeals was a matter of absolute necessity, and that, therefore, not only should the Government appoint more Sub-Commissioners, but that they ought to adopt measures for the strengthening the Court of Appeal by diverting power from the Common Law Courts to the Land Commission. Perhaps the Government would give him some information as to the course they intended to take in the matter of the renewal of appearance contained in the Land Act. The hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury had said that it was not the practice of the Treasury to estimate for more than the period over which an Act operated; but they all knew that the Act must be extended beyond the 22nd of August next, and he thought it would be a most unfortunate course to take to have no provision whatever for its continuance beyond that time. It would hardly be possible for such a course as that to be taken, and he thought they were entitled to know what the Government proposed to do in the matter. He would respectfully urge upon the Government the necessity of speed in this matter; time was of the essence of the case, as had been pointed out by Chief Justice Pallas himself. With regard to the Commissioners, they knew very well that Mr. French was constantly in communication with Members of the Government such as the right hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite. He was appointed last year, having been constantly about the House and the landlord party, and they knew very well that he was put in as a landlord's man. He could realize the difficulty the Land Commissioners had in making further new appointments; but it was necessary that some new appointments should be made if the work was to go on. And now he would turn to the administration of another Act before them—namely, the Crimes Act. He was very sorry to hear what the Representative of the Irish Government had said with regard to one case which had been brought before their notice. The right hon. Gentleman opposite, whom he would not call the Chief Secretary, because he supposed they were now to look upon him as the Head of the Irish Local Government Board, in his statement with regard to Dr. Magner was most remarkable. He (Mr. T. M. Healy) had always thought that when a man was punished for a crime he got the full measure of his punishment at the hands of the magistrates and the Court who convicted him; but that did not seem to be the case, or, at any rate, that did not appear to be the view of Her Majesty's Government. Dr. Magner's offence was that he presided at a meeting. It was the first time in his entire career that he had done so. Now it was a very odd thing that the Government should take a firm stand with regard to this gentleman. Dr. Magner was a man of only 22 years of age, a distinguished University student. He got his M.D. before 21, and he was also an M.A. of the same University where he obtained his degree. He (Mr. T. M. Healy) could imagine a gentleman of that position, on the first time of his having to make a speech on the Land Question and to preside over a meeting of Irish tenant farmers, not having great happiness in his choice of language, at any rate not so happy a choice as that which might be expected from the author of *A Defence of Philosophic Doubt.* Such a man would be right enough in the choice of his language, no doubt; but the expression for which Dr. Magner was punished with two months' imprisonment —namely, that the people had struck against rent, was an expression which Dr. Magner denied that he had ever used. Now anything more grotesque than the system of reporting employed by the Irish police could not be imagined. Let them take such a test as this. Supposing the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) conceived with his great intellect and genius a great speech which it took him one hour to deliver. An Irish police reporter would condense that speech into half-a-column, although, as delivered, it would probably occupy three columns of the space of a newspaper. There they saw the genius of a police reporter as distinguished from the genius of a Gentleman like the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. From his own knowledge of these Irish police reporters, to say that they could take down every word of a speech was a perfect farce. They made a practice of copying a great deal from the newspapers; but in this case there was no report in the papers of the speech for which two months' imprisonment had been meted out to Dr. Magner. But let them assume as settled that Dr. Magner deserved his punishment, what did they find? Why, that he got a sentence of two months' imprisonment, which was confirmed on appeal. Now the County Court Judge, on hearing the appeal, said he would let him off on his own recognizances if he would promise to make no more speeches; but Dr. Magner declined altogether to have his mouth shut thus ignobly. Dr. Magner got only two months' imprisonment from their own Resident Magistrate, and yet the Government, or the right hon. Gentleman, as their representative, inflicted upon this gentleman the following disability:—He fined him £200 a-year for life. Well, he (Mr. T. M. Healy) contended that that was an abominable misuse of the powers placed in the hands of the Government. The idea of a man who only got two months' imprisonment for a particular offence for which under the law he might have got six months—when the ends of justice were met by such a small term of imprisonment—being fined £200 a-year for life was abominable. That was the punishment, because they practically said to Dr. Magner that he should never occupy the position of dispensary doctor so long as he lived—or, at any rate, so long as the present Government was in Office, which, after all, might not be a very long period, which was a reflection with which Dr. Magner might possibly console himself. He (Mr. T. M. Healy), however, would ask the Government to reflect on the extensive reservoir of hatred which they were probably storing up for themselves. The Irish Members wanted, when they got Ireland, to have it as a going concern, and when the present Government did things like this they felt bound to protest against the inconvenience which was being prepared for them. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary himself had once committed the great crime of being a young man. Perhaps when he was 21 he said some things which he would not look upon with delight now, and which he would not care to have contemplated as his final utterances upon the subjects with which they dealt. That was not all. If this were a *bonâ fide* dismissal he could understand it, but he knew it was not. He knew there were men who wanted the post. Dr. Magner had only just been made dispensary doctor, and several gentlemen connected with the Orange and landlord clique had expected to get the situation. Dr. Magner was certainly not an agitator; he was an obscure country doctor, and nobody had ever heard of him before this prosecution. The Government picked him out for prosecution and made his name known all through the country. He was only 22 years of age, and the Government fixed this indelible disability upon him. He (Mr. T. M. Healy) contended that this was an abominable use of the powers of the Executive. They heard a great deal of Mr. Forster's Act, and, no doubt, it was a very stringent Act. But they all remembered the case of Dr. Kenny. It was greatly to the credit of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, that no sooner had Dr. Kenny's case been raised in the House of Commons, he took Mr. Forster aside and said—"We did not pass this Act with this object; we passed it for altogether different objects." Although a sealed order had never been withdrawn before, the sealed order in the case of Dr. Kenny was withdrawn, and that gentleman was now in the enjoyment of the position of dispensary doctor of North Dublin Union. They heard a great deal, in times like these, about Civil servants making speeches and publishing pamphlets. The Government gave them full liberty to do this, and civil servants did as they pleased. *The Continuity of the Irish Revolutionary Movement* could be had for 3*d.* Civil servants gave the Nationalists of Ireland as much offence as Dr. Magner had given the Government. There was no limit to the cases which might be tried under the Crimes Act, and yet they had Ministers saying—"We have relegated all these matters to a most fair and impartial tribunal, consisting of excellent gentlemen, paid fair salaries; these matters are entirely in their hands; the Government have no cognizance whatever of these prosecutions. The prosecutions are approved by the Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Peter O'Brien), who has not the honour of a seat in this House ; and we must let the law take its course." He respectfully submitted that, on its merits, Dr. Magner's was a fair case for the reconsideration of the Government on the point of the eternity of the punishment. It would be only a reasonable thing, if the young gentleman overstepped himself again for the Government to take notice of the fact. He claimed for Dr. Magner the same sanction the Government gave to Civil servants; he claimed that they should give him, say, Primrose limits. It was not the business of the Government in Ireland to be always fighting the people; and he did not believe any Member of the Tory Party from Ireland was prepared to say that Dr. Magner ought to be visited with perpetual punishment. He hoped the Government would say that if Dr. Magner were re-elected his re-election would not be cancelled, because otherwise they would only add to their difficulties in Ireland. The collection of poor rates was often as difficult as the collection of rent, and by the dismissal of a man like Dr. Magner, as well as by increasing the police force against the sentiment of the people, the Government would get into a sea of troubles which wonld very soon lead to the shipwreck of their administration in Ireland. He (Mr. T. M. Healy) had intended to touch upon the case of Mr. Stoney, but he thought it was better to wait until he got the Papers promised hon. Members by the Government. He would, however, allude to the case of Mr. James Byrne. Lord Ashbourne dismissed Mr. James Byrne from the Commission of the Peace because he went from Mallow to Fermoy to take part as a magistrate of the county of Cork in the adjudication of a case in the town of Fermoy. The railway fare was only 2*s.* 6*d.*, so that hon. Members could easily realize that the distance travelled by Mr. James Byrne upon this occasion was not great. It had been the practice in Ireland for county magistrates to go from one district to another within their county. That had been the immemorial practice, and no one had ever for a moment dreamt that there was any harm in it. But the Lord Chancellor, without giving Mr. James Byrne a caution, without saying you must not do this again, dismissed him from the Commission. Was there ever such an arbitrary proceeding? Mr. Stoney was guilty of misappropriating public money, but he was allowed to bloom in the Commission of the Peace. Look at the disparity in the treatment of the two cases. But that was not all. About the time that Mr. James Byrne went to Fermoy, 51 magistrates crowded into the City of Cork from their own divisions to vote for a public house license for Sir George Colthurst's benefit. They heard of the publicans being the backbone of the National movement; but he maintained that in every instance in which the magistrates added another public house to the number, they did it for some corrupt motive of their own. The police protested against the licence, the rector and the parish priest of the place in which the public house was situated protested against it, and yet 59 magistrates crowded into the City of Cork to vote down the opinion of the local magistrates. Did Lord Ashbourne take action in the case of these 59 magistrates? Not a bit of it. If Lord Ashbourne would act with something like equality, with something like fairness with regard to these magistrates, not only the cause of justice but the cause of temperance would be very much advanced. If a rule could be made by which magistrates could be kept within their own Petty Sessional districts, they would find that the jobs now committed by licensing sessions—by landlords and Orange magistrates—would soon be put a stop to. Mr. James Byrne was dismissed for doing that which it was well known magistrates did every day in the week. The Government held up to them as the pink of magisterial chivalry, Mr. Cecil Roche, and other Resident Magistrates. Did the magistrates of Ireland keep to their Petty Sessional districts? No; neither did they keep to their own counties. They went from county to county, and were paid for doing so. But because Mr. James Byrne went from Mallow to Fermoy to adjudicate upon a case, he was dismissed from the Commission of the Peace. And yet Irishmen were expected to respect the administration of the law. They did not respect the administration of the law, but despised it. The Irish Members were expected to offer up a Hosanna that the Irish Government were good enough to administer the affairs of their country. He thought it was quite possible for the Tory Party to rule Ireland without provoking all the miserable feelings they did provoke. If they wanted to remain in Ireland, it was certainly not necessary for them to wade through so much dirt. It was of such things as he had mentioned the Irish Members complained. They were of little moment to English gentlemen, but Irishmen felt them keenly. Mr. James Byrne was a man of most moderate character, a man who was at one time disposed to be almost too moderate. He (Mr. T. M. Healy) did not think Mr. James Byrne was ever a member of the Land League, or that he was ever a member of the National League. It was most unfortunate that the Government, instead of steering an even keel in Ireland, were creating in the minds of the people a conviction that they were imbued with only one spirit, and that was a spirit of inequality and exasperation.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said, he desired to say a word or two with reference to Mr. James Byrne, and the action of magistrates in the Irish Petty Sessional districts. The hon. and learned Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy) said it was an immemorial practice for magistrates to go from one district to another——

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I ought to have interfered before. The hon. and learned Member for North Longford was evidently travelling outside the Vote in assailing the action of the Lord Chancellor. There is no salary for the Lord Chancellor provided for in the Vote.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said, he only intended to deal with the case of Mr. James Byrne, and therefore he would not proceed.

MR. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) said, he thought his hon. and learned Friend the Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy) had a right to some answer from the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour). He did not know whether it was the intention of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to insult the Members who came here to speak on behalf of the Irish people, but whether that be his intention or not, it certainly was nothing less than an insult to hon. Members from Ireland to be refused an answer from the right hon. Gentleman when they put forward perfectly legitimate grievances in a most moderate manner. His hon. and learned Friend had spoken of the case of Dr. Magner. It was an exceedingly hard case, and had caused the greatest possible indignation throughout the South of Ireland. It was a case in which a young professional man was deprived by the action of the Government of his means of livelihood. £200 a-year was a great deal to Dr. Magner. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland for doing, as far as he (Mr. W. Redmond) could make out, very little, received £4,500 a-year. Would he not for that sum condescend to tell them why Dr. Magner was deprived by the action of the Government of his only means of livelihood?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said, that perhaps he might be allowed to observe that the hon. Gentleman could not have been in the House during the whole of the discussion upon the Vote, or he would have known that he (Mr. A. J. Balfour) had spoken twice.

MR. W. REDMOND asked, if he might observe that if the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant had kept his eyes a little more open than he was usually in the habit of doing, he would have seen he (Mr. W. Redmond) was in the House when last he spoke. It was simply because that, when the right hon. Gentleman rose to deal with the question of Dr. Magner, he did not give any justification, or even explanation, of the conduct of the Government, that he (Mr. W. Redmond) held his hon. and learned Friend the Member for North Longford was entitled to some reply from the Government. When the right hon. Gentleman spoke of the case of Dr. Magner, he merely said that the Government had determined to adhere to their decision in depriving the gentleman of his professional occupation. But the right hon. Gentleman did not say on what grounds the Government had come to this cruel conclusion, and he did not point out in what particular manner the Government hoped to make the Irish people more satisfied with the rule of the Government, or to make the country generally more tranquil by this action in connection with Dr. Magner. His hon. and learned Friend said it would be quite possible for a Tory Government to rule the people of Ireland without committing so very many actions utterly repugnant to the general population of the land. The hon. and learned Gentleman said that the Government might go through with their work without doing so much dirty work. That was, he had no doubt, to some extent true, and, as far as he was concerned, he had only to say that the action of the Government with regard to Dr. Magner, although it is painful in the last degree that a man of Dr. Magner's position should be so punished for doing absolutely nothing at all, would only have, like a great many other actions of the Government, the effect of rendering the Government's rule in Ireland absolutely impossible to be attended with any happy results whatever. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant had boasted of having spoken twice to-night, though he was not usually so condescending to the Irish Members. In order that he might be relieved from a portion of the work which Chief Secretaries had always performed for their salaries, the right hon. Gentleman had proposed that his Under Secretary should receive £1,000 a-year. Dr. Magner was deprived of his humble means of livelihood because it was alleged that on behalf of the National League he gave offence to the Government and to the supporters of the Government, and because it was alleged that his action in attending a certain meeting was calculated to produce disturbance and ill-will in the district. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant was in a few days to receive a bountiful salary. Whatever Dr. Magner had done in the way of causing a breach or disturbance of the peace in the district was exceedingly little compared with the provocation the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant had given by his conduct in the past. Having seceded from the Home Rule movement——

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I must remind the hon. Gentleman that the House has passed a Rule which directs that the repetition of other person's arguments is not permissible.

MR. W. REDMOND said, he should be exceedingly sorry unnecessarily to repeat any argument which he had heard, and if the Chairman would be good enough to point out the argument to which he alluded, he (Mr. W. Redmond) would avoid it. He was merely pointing out that there were plenty of people in Ireland upon the Government's side who had undoubtedly done more towards creating disturbance and ill-will than Dr. Magner had done by his action. He (Mr. W. Redmond) maintained that the action of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary in refusing to reply to the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for North Longford, and in refusing to hold out some hope that the punishment which had been so unfairly meted out to Dr. Magner would be mitigated, was only driving another nail into the coffin of the Tory Government in Ireland. The only other remark he had to make was with regard to the Land Commission. It had been pointed out that new Land Commissioners should be appointed in order to give effect to the Land Act of 1881, and the subsequent measures amending that Act. As the Representative of a large agricultural county he thought something more should be done than the mere appointment of additional Land Commissioners in order to expedite the business of the Commission. The whole establishment of the Land Commission should be overhauled and remodelled for whatever chance there was of doing permanent good by the Land Act of 1881 and subsequent measures amending that Act. There was no possible chance of inspiring the people with the slightest confidence in its composition unless they gave the people the impression that the Land Commissioners were men who would impartially do justice to them. Many of the men who had been appointed to fix rents had not been appointed on account of their qualifications, but simply through the old worn system of favour, begging, and place hunting. Men had tried to get positions as Sub-Commissioners for their relatives and friends merely in order that they might get some money out of the Government and not because they were qualified. He maintained that the system of appointing Land Commissioners should be thoroughly overhauled. No one should be appointed at the request of any friend of the Government, no matter how influential he might be, unless he was proved beyond all question to be a man capable for the position and unless he was a man who would receive the support and the confidence of the tenant farmers of the country. That was not the case at the present time. The great bulk of the Land Commissioners were men who were distinctly in touch and in sympathy, not with the masses of the people who were to be benefited by the Act, but with the landlord classes who were to be more or less injured by the Act. He had found that the greatest complaint which the tenant farmers of his own constituency and of other parts of Ireland he had visited, had to make with respect to the Land Act of 1881 was against the character of the men who were appointed. He believed that this Government or any Government who went to Ireland would be doing the best thing they could for the people and ultimately for the landlords if they appointed proper Sub-Commissioners. By doing this they would benefit the landlords because people would go into Court and have rents fixed who were now deterred from going into Court owing to the character of the Commissioners. If the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary was not sufficiently condescending to reply to them with regard to Dr. Magner's case, he ought at least to say whether the Government had any intention of inaugurating a thorough and systematic way of appointing Commissioners under the Land Act who would really have the confidence of the people.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) said, he noticed that the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) had arrived, but he hoped the right hon. Gentleman was not going to apply the closure for some time longer, because he desired to make a few remarks before the discussion closed. His hon. Friend had referred to the case of Dr. Magner. He was afraid that under a Standing Order he would not be allowed by the Chairman to refer to it. If he were allowed to do so, he would call attention to a fact what had not been mentioned by previous speakers. Dr. Magner held two appointments. From one of them he had been dismissed by the Local Government Board, and that was the matter which was under consideration. The second appointment was that of medical attendant to the police stations in his district, and after Dr. Magner's conviction and before the appeal was decided the Lord Lieutenant displayed his partizanship by dismissing this young man instanter. That would not have been so remarkable but that the Government in reference to another case, the case of a magistrate named Barrett, who had been accused of a criminal offence, said, when the matter was brought to their notice, they had not dismissed Barrett because they were waiting the result of the appeal to the Quarter Sessions. Immediately a Nationalist doctor came on the tapis the Government forgot their fine principles and ran him to ground without waiting the result of an appeal. The case of Dr. Magner was only like many occurring in Ireland at the present time, and he rose to call attention to other cases of the same kind to illustrate the spirit in which the Government of Ireland was carried on. There was the case of the prison warder of Tullamore, who the other day was fined by the right hon. Gentleman through his subordinate £7 a-year for life, because his wife, in his absence, lighted a candle in her window in celebration of the release of Mr. William O'Brien. A more vindictive, a more little-minded, a more contemptible proceeding, he supposed, was never heard of in any civilized world; and this was done to preserve the Union—was done in the name of law and order. That was not the only case. Take the case of the hon. Member for West Cork (Mr. Gilhooly), who had just been convicted under the Crimes Act, and sentenced to two months' imprisonment. That did not satisfy the Government. They used their power, obtained under the Crimes Act, by a clause which was never debated in the House; they used their power to destroy the hon. Gentleman in his business, for they had endorsed upon his licence the fact of his conviction. When his licence came up next year for renewal the endorsement would be an effectual bar to his obtaining his licence again, and he would be thereby deprived of his principal means of livelihood. Then, again, there was the case of the unfortunate man Ferriter. Ferriter had been imprisoned three times within the last three months. He was imprisoned, first, for assaulting the police. But the assault was only a constructive assault, for it consisted in slamming the door in the face of a policeman. The policeman did not think of making a charge for three days; but when the facts were brought to the attention of the gentlemen in Dublin Castle they wired instructions to have the man prosecuted for the offence. Ferriter was prosecuted and sentenced to a fortnight's imprisonment. Two other charges were brought against him, and he was sentenced to two other terms of imprisonment. He (Mr. Clancy) called that downright, contemptible persecution. These things were done "to preserve the Union," and to "create a friendly feeling in the minds of the people of Ireland, and give the people of Great Britain confidence in the administrators of the law." Why, these were the things which made the Union hateful. and inspired distrust in the administration of the law. These were the things that made the people of Ireland see in every administrator of the law in Ireland, not a protector of their interests, but an enemy and a partizan. Take a case reported the other day in a daily paper in Dublin. A tenant of the notorious rack-renting landlady—Mrs. Maroney—was imprisoned under the Coercion Act at the very time he had an application pending in the Land Court for the fixing of a fair rent. The result was that he had to make an application at a cost of £10 10*s*., in order to be represented at the Court while his case was under discussion. He (Mr. Clancy) had no hesitation in charging, from his place in this House, that between the local administrator of the law and Mrs. Maroney a conspiracy was got up for the purpose of preventing this tenant from being in Court at the hearing of his own case, or, at the best, for the purpose of having him fined £10 10*s*. for daring to make an application to the Land Court. This was not the only case of the kind. There was the case of Dr. Hayes, which had already been referred to to-night. This gentleman was voted an increase of salary by the Local Authorities in his district. It was very curious that this was the first case in which the Government refused to endorse the increase of salary, and that the gentleman in this case was the one who, on the trial of Mr. Blane, M.P., declined to give evidence for the Crown to the effect that he was intimidated by the Plan of Campaign. He refused to say that the Plan of Campaign was a terror to him, and in that way he vindicated Mr. Blane. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, in the remarks he condescended to make to the House, had said that all these things would do no harm to those people. He had said that Dr. Magner would not suffer in the general esteem of the people. That he (Mr. Clancy) considered a remarkably curious admission from the right hon. Gentleman. It was a curious confession from the Head Administrator the chief gaolor in Ireland—the head administrator of the Crimes Act—that the effect of all his persecution was to make these men popular in Ireland. He begged to call attention to that. He begged to draw the attention of Liberal Unionists to that admission—that the persecution of these people in Ireland would not injure them in the estimation of the people; and he (Mr. Clancy) sincerely hoped it would not. But no thanks to the Government for that. They had done their best to destroy the prospects of these men—to ruin them for life—and, as he had said before, what turned the whole thing into a farce was that they said they were doing this to maintain the Union and increase respect for law and order, and bind the two Nations together in tangible bonds of friendship. He passed from that to another matter. If anyone could be astonished by anything the present Government could say or do, he thought they would be astonished by the remark of the hon. and learned Solicitor General for England (Sir Edward Clarke) to-night. The hon. and learned Gentleman had interrupted the hon. and learned Member for West Kerry (Mr. Edward Harrington), when pointing out that in Tralee there was a firm of solicitors, one of whom was engaged for the Crown, and the other of whom was engaged for all the moonlighters who were accused in the county. The hon. and learned Gentleman said "Why not?" He thought it no disgrace, no indecency, that one member of a firm of solicitors should be perpetually engaged for the Crown and the other perpetually engaged for the accused; he did not think there was any probability of collusion. He, perhaps, did not know that in a recent case, one in which great suspicion attached to the accused from the first, the prisoner, instead of being convicted, as he certainly would have been if he had been tried in Wicklow, and had been prosecuted by another solicitor, was acquitted. He (Mr. Clancy) thought that the interruption of the hon. and learned Gentleman, and the speech by which he afterwards attempted to justify it, was one of the most indecent things he ever heard, either in the House or out of it.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member must withdraw that word.

Mr. CLANCY said, that if he had transgressed the Rules he apologized and withdrew, but he had thought he was justified in describing in as vigorous language as he could command, a proceeding that he thought anything but creditable to the Administration in Ireland, and which would not be tolerated in England or Scotland. This was only of apiece with the whole of the conduct of the Government in Ireland. He (Mr. Clancy) and his Friends charged partizanship on the part of the Administration. Who tried the hon. Gentleman the Member for West Cork (Mr. Gilhooly) the other day? They had 72 Resident Magistrates in Ireland. They —the Government—had sent them from county to county to try these cases, and the body was composed of the most ignorant and most learned of men. The man who had been chosen to try the hon. Gentleman the Member for West Cork was the very magistrate whom the hon. Member had been attacking—whether justly or unjustly—for his administration of the law during the past five or six years. They had selected to try the hon. Member the man who must have in his mind an animus against him. Whether or not the Government knew it, as a matter of fact they had sent down a man to wreak his vengeance on the hon. Member. His (Mr. Clancy's) point was that justice should not only be pure, but above suspicion; and surely when they saw a man tried by a magistrate who must have been his personal enemy for years, he (Mr. Clancy) did not care whether the justice was pure or not, but he contended that suspicion necessarily attached to it, and that in the minds of the people such administration of the law was destined to disgrace and failure. He referred to Mr. Cecil Roche. It was denied the other day in the House that this man had been sent about from county to county, but some most extraordinary denials were sometimes made in this House. Why, this gentleman had tried cases in Clare, Kerry, Cork, and Limerick. He had been sent all over the Province of Munster. Though the Government had declined to place Returns on the Table of the House showing what magistrates had adjudicated on these cases in Ireland, he (Mr. Clancy) begged to tell them that he had personally taken an account of the matter, and was in a position to state that Mr. Cecil Roche—this trusted servant of the Castle—was entrusted with twice as many cases as any other Resident Magistrate in the country. Now he would refer to a matter which had very much affected the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary. The right hon. Gentleman had got very indignant for having been taunted with having given instructions to the Resident Magistrates as to how they were to perform their duties under the Coercion Act. The right hon. Gentleman had affected indignation, and in some correspondence he had had on the subject that such a practice on the part of a Minister would bring impeachment in its train. Well, he (Mr. Clancy) would place in the hands of the House a simple narrative of facts, and the House would be able to judge whether this impeachment ought to lie against the Chief Secretary. The right hon. Gentleman said he had had no communication with the men who administered the Act. The right hon. Gentleman knew what *The Irish Times* of Dublin was. It was in the confidence of the Government. *The Irish Times* had representatives in the Castle. It got its items of information from day to day from the Castle straight. It boasted sometimes of doing so. In leading articles and paragraphs it boasted of intimate acquaintance with the Castle officials. Well, on the 22nd of October, 1887, there appeared in the paper this announcement—

> "Colonel Turner, Captain Welch, and Mr. Cecil Roche, Resident Magistrates, who have been in attendance upon the Chief Secretary for the past two days at the Castle, have returned to their districts."

They were not told what passed between the Chief Secretary and the Resident Magistrates, but if nothing more had happened, it was an indecent thing for the men who administered the Coercion

Act to be found at any time closeted with the chief promoter of all the prosecutions. Think what would happen in England if the Judges of the land were from day to day closeted with the Public Prosecutor. Think of the magistrates of London spending two days together with the Director of Public Prosecutions. Why, if they had this thing palpably going on in London, they would have the Ministers who sanctioned it hurled from power amidst the execrations of the people. Amongst other magistrates were Colonel Turner, Captain Slack, Captain Stokes, Captain Welch, Captain Butler, Mr. Burton. Of these, it might be said that those who were only Divisional Magistrates had a right to be at the Castle, but what could be said of other magistrates like Mr. Cecil Roche, Captain Welch and Captain Butler, who had to sit and adjudicate upon cases under the Coercion Act? What did he find took place after these meetings? After these consultations with the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary on October 20th, 21st and 22nd, it was recorded that on November 7th Captain Welch held a Court at Kilrush, and on November 8th Colonel Turner, a man who had no right to be there at all, sat on the Bench with the magistrates. He charged Colonel Turner with ear-wigging the Judges on the Bench, with conveying the wishes of the Government to the Magistrates who tried the cases. He had no hesitation in saying that Colonel Turner sat on the Bench to dictate to the judges the sentences they should pass. On November 10th Captain Butler held a Coercion Court, on the Saturday Messrs. Hodder and Roche held a Court at Ennis, and on the 20th carried out a similar mission at Tulla. That was to say, that the very men who were closeted with the Chief Secretary, who knew his views and wishes, these men sat afterwards in open Court, and shamelessly adjudicated on cases that must at the time have been under the cognizance of the Chief Secretary. Anything more indecent in the administration of the law he had not heard of. The Government now thought proper to make no reply, but the country would hear of these proceedings and make an adequate reply he hoped at the proper time. If the right hon. Gentleman thought he was going to get over these Votes easily without explaining in answer to these grave indictments brought against him, these plain allegations of partizanship in judicial proceedings, he was greatly mistaken. There was not one of these charges that Irish Members did not feel called upon to repeat again and again, and not intending any disrespect to the authority of the Chair, they would not be debarred by any rules from doing so.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): It is with great regret that I feel obliged to intervene——

MR. T. M. HEALY: You cannot make a speech on the Closure Motion.

MR. W. H. SMITH: With great regret, and impelled by the exigencies of the case, I claim to move that the Question be now put.

Question put accordingly, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 188; Noes 67: Majority 121.—(Div. List, No. 41.)

Question put, "That a sum, not exceeding £3,614,903, be granted, on account, for and toward the said Service and Revenue Departments."

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 207; Noes 41: Majority 166.—(Div. List, No. 42.)

(4.) £3,309 7*s.* 4*d.*, Civil Services (Excesses).

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) said, he wished to have some explanation of the causes of these excesses. He understood that the Committee were to have full explanation accompanying the Supplementary Estimates, and it might be supposed that this would include particulars as to the nature of these excesses. But he had looked through the Estimates and vainly tried to find it. One or two items were mentioned, but then came the gross sum. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury could give some explanation?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.) said, the excesses did not arise out of the accounts of the current year, but from the year 1886-7. They were before the Public Accounts Committee yesterday, and thoroughly investigated by that Committee before being submitted to the House.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) said, there was one question arose on the item that caused most of the excess. It was connected with the bankruptcy business of the County Courts. It was perfectly true that this matter came before the Public Accounts Committee yesterday; but that Committee elicited the fact that neither the County Court authorities, nor apparently the Board of Trade, had any information as to the amount of Revenue derived from the bankruptcy business in County Courts. Now, as under the Act of 1883 a considerable amount of bankruptcy business was thrown on the Courts, it was perfectly clear that without that information it was impossible for the House, which was supposed to be informed as to the way in which the Act was working, to know what was the actual amount of Revenue derived from stamps in connection with bankruptcy business. Estimates were laid before the House every year, and an elaborate account of how the Act worked; but there was excluded from that statement everything connected with the business of bankruptcy in County Courts, and it was, therefore, impossible for the House to form a judgment. The Government, at any rate, ought to be in possession of this information; but the Committee were assured yesterday this was not so. He would ask whether it would be possible to obtain this?

Mr. JACKSON said, he would do that. It had not been done, but he would get the information.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: When?

Mr. JACKSON: At once. As soon as it is possible.

Vote *agreed to.*

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow.*

Committee to sit again *To-morrow.*

WAYS AND MEANS.—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I must object. I feel that we have been very badly treated by the Government this evening.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I hope the hon. Member will not press his objection.

Mr. DILLON: I think the right hon. Gentleman might have extended to us some of that courtesy he is ready to demand.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I hope I am not wanting in courtesy. As I have frequently pointed out for days past, it is a matter of the highest importance that we should get these Votes to-night.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): It was 25 minutes to 12, and you would not wait.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: The hon. and learned Gentleman is aware that the clock had just struck 12 when we got through the Vote, and he knows also that the Vote is not complete without the Vote in Committee of Ways and Means. It will be a cause of great inconvenience if that Vote is not now taken. Of course, it is in the power of hon. Gentlemen to prevent this; but I repeat again it will result in much inconvenience to the Public Service if the Vote is not now taken.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): Under the circumstances, I hope hon. Members will allow the Vote to be taken, though I confess I do think that the right hon. Gentleman might have postponed his Motion for closing the debate for a quarter of an hour. The right hon. Gentleman says the Division was only completed in time to take the last Vote at 12 o'clock; but he must remember that the Division on his own Motion occupied some 20 minutes, and if he had allowed the time to be given for discussion he might have relied upon getting his Vote. I believe he would have got his Vote if he had not made his Motion for Closure—[*Ironical cheers and laughter*]—Oh, well! if that is the tone and spirit in which right hon. Gentlemen are prepared to meet me, I will go no further in assisting the Government. I was going to appeal to the hon. Member to withdraw his objection; but, considering the spirit with which I am met, I will not attempt to do so.

Mr. DILLON: The clock pointed to half-past 11, and there was not the slightest intention of preventing the Vote being taken. Every Member of the House must have seen there was no conceivable object in moving the closure at half-past 11, except to show the greatest possible discourtesy to a Member. No time was to be gained; the only object was to close the mouth of a

Member of the House, without gaining any other object whatever. The right hon. Gentleman might have interposed to close the debate at 5 minutes to 12, but I repeat there was no intention of preventing a decision on the Vote. I had an important matter to refer to, and my doing so would have occupied some 10 or 15 minutes; no public object was served by moving the Closure, and I consider the right hon. Gentleman did distinctly offer to an humble Member of this House the greatest possible insult one Member could offer to another, That being so, I do not think that he can make any claim upon our courtesy.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I ask for no courtesy. I desire always to act with the greatest possible courtesy; but I have certain duties to discharge—they may be disagreeable duties, but they have to be discharged, whether they are pleasant or unpleasant to hon. Members or to myself. I made the Motion at 25 minutes to 12, because I was conscious of the fact that two Divisions would take place unless the Closure was accepted, and then another Vote had to be taken, to which the hon. Member objected, and I could not be certain to what length the debate might be continued. Whether I was right or whether I was wrong, is not a question of importance, except so far as I am concerned. I have done what I thought necessary in the interests of the House and of Public Business; and if, under the circumstances, hon. Gentlemen think it right to object to this Vote now, I must submit, for the Rules of the House give them the power to do so.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: As this may form a precedent, perhaps some understanding may be arrived at. The right hon. Gentleman thinks it is a very small matter whether he was right or wrong; but he is mistaken. The same course was taken the other night. If, when my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) rose, the right hon. Gentleman had got up and said—"It is necessary we should have this Vote; are you going to let us have it?" we should at once have told the right hon. Gentleman that we did not intend to obstruct the Vote. But you have allowed the Admirals to occupy two days with the former Vote, not so large a Vote as this, and we have but three hours and a-half or four hours' discussion of this Vote of £3,000,000 or £4,000,000. With a word or two from the right hon. Gentleman, an understanding could have been arrived at. As a matter of fact, the Excess Vote was called on at three minutes to 12, and had we the desire to obstruct, nothing would have been easier than to talk the time out; but we showed our *bonâ fides*, and allowed the Vote to be taken. The right hon. Gentleman would set a useful precedent if, instead of moving the Closure in this peremptory way—and I say it in no offensive sense—instead of lecturing us, for he has no business to talk on the Motion—if he, on future ocsasions, instead of resorting to this short-shrift principle, made an appeal to Members on the exigencies of the position. Let him take the counsel given by my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) the other night, when the right hon. Gentleman closed, in a similar manner, a question in reference to the use of stone in some buildings in Ireland; let him try some measure of conciliation, and afterwards resort to the extreme Motion if necessary. I hope now, under all the circumstances, and after the appeal of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), and being, for my own part, prepared to return good for evil, that the Vote may be allowed to be taken.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Gentleman withdraw his objection?

Mr. BIGGAR: I object.

Committee *deferred* till *To-morrow*, at Two of the clock.

MOTIONS.

——o——

BAIL (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of The Lord Advocate, Bill to amend the Law of Bail in Scotland, *ordered* to be brought in by The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General, and Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 172.]

HOUSE OF COMMONS (ADMISSION OF STRANGERS).

Select Committee *appointed*, "to inquire into the Rules and Regulations under which Strangers are admitted to this House and its precincts, and to report whether any alterations in the same are expedient."—(*Viscount Ebrington.*)

ARMY ESTIMATES.

Ordered, That the Select Committee on Army Estimates do consist of Seventeen Members;—

The Committee was accordingly *nominated* of,—Lord Randolph Churchill, Mr. Jennings, Mr. A. Gathorne-Hardy, Mr. James Campbell, Sir Frederick FitzWygram, Captain Cotton, Mr. Brodrick, Mr. Stanhope, Sir Henry Havelock-Allan, Sir William Crossman, Mr. Childers, Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Mr. Woodall, Mr. Picton, Dr. Cameron, Colonel Nolan, and Mr. O'Kelly, with power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the Quorum.

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT.

Ordered, That so much of the Lords Message as proposes the time and place of meeting of the Joint Committee on Debates and Proceedings in Parliament be now considered.

Lords Message *considered* accordingly.

Ordered, That the Select Committee appointed to join with the Committee of the Lords, to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament, do meet in Room No. 1, Upper Corridor, on Thursday next, at Twelve of the clock.

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords, to acquaint their Lordships that this House hath directed the Select Committee appointed by them to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament, do meet in Room No. 1, Upper Corridor, on Thursday next, at Twelve of the clock.

Ordered, That the Select Committee have power to agree in the appointment of a Chairman.

House adjourned at a quarter after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 16*th March*, 1888.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills — *Committee* — Cathedral Churches (2-46).

Third Reading—Pharmacy Acts Amendment* (39); Railway and Canal Traffic* (41), and *passed.*

Withdrawn—Ecclesiastical Procedure* (28).

CATHEDRAL CHURCHES BILL.—(No. 2.)

(*The Lord Bishop of Carlisle.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee, read.

The Bishop of CARLISLE (Dr. Goodwin), in moving that the House go into Committee on this Bill, said, that he had received a representation on the subject of the cathedral church of Manchester, the case of which was a peculiar one. It now appeared that Sub-sections 2 and 3 of this Bill, if made law, would enable the Dean and Chapter to drive a coach and four through a late decision of a Court of Law with respect to the funds of the cathedral church of Manchester. No such intention could have been conceived by himself or any of the promoters of the Bill. He ventured to doubt whether the opinion was a correct one. He did not think that under the clause as it stood there could possibly be any interference with the Chapter of the cathedral, and certainly none was intended. But with regard to the whole question of the Manchester Cathedral, he understood from Lord Egerton, who was not now in his place, that it would probably be necessary to introduce a separate Bill. If any noble Lord would move that Manchester be excepted from all action of the Bill, he did not know that he should offer any opposition; but he thought he should be going beyond his proper office if he had excepted from the operation of the Bill a cathedral which was submitted to their consideration by Her Majesty's Commisssion.

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee upon the said Bill."—(*The Lord Bishop of Carlisle.*)

Motion *agreed to;* House in Committee (accordingly).

Clauses 1 to 10, inclusive, *agreed to*, with Amendments.

Clause 11 (Transfer of canonries between Crown and bishops).

Earl BEAUCHAMP said, he objected to the proposal in the clause to give to the minor canons and other officials of a cathedral the right to priority of presentation to benefices in the gift of the Dean and Chapter. When an important town living in the gift of the Dean and Chapter of a cathedral became vacant, why should a minor canon have an absolute right to be appointed, although possibly not well qualified? The clause would create new rights, and he feared that the interests of important parishes might suffer if this proposed change were agreed to. Of course the Dean and Chapter of a cathedral ought to have the right to present any qualified official to a living in their gift; but it would not be wise to enact that a minor canon should have a preferential right to appointment at the conclusion of his term of office.

The Bishop of CARLISLE said, that the question whether a man was fit or not was to be left to the judgment of the Dean and Chapter.

The Bishop of LICHFIELD said, he could not see why the Dean and Chapter should be limited any more than the Bishop.

On the Motion of the Bishop of Carlisle, Amendment made, making the clause applicable to collegiate as well as cathedral churches.

Moved, to leave out Clause 11 as amended.—(*The Lord Bishop of Lichfield.*)

On Question, "That the clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill,"

Their Lordships *divided:*—Contents 6: Not-Contents 44: Majority 38.

Clause *struck out.*

Remaining Clauses *agreed to.*

House *resumed.*

Bill to be *printed,* as amended. (No. 46.)

PRISONS (SCOTLAND).

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

The Earl of ELGIN, in rising to call attention to the action of the Prison Commissioners in Scotland; and to ask the Secretary for Scotland, Whether he has any information to show that the concentration of prisoners in a few large prisons, by the closing of local prisons, well equipped and well managed, like that at Cupar, would tend to increased efficiency or diminished expenditure? said, their Lordships would remember that in 1877 Acts were passed for England, Scotland, and Ireland which transferred the control of the prisons from the local to the Imperial authorities, and which also transferred a portion of the cost formerly falling on the local authorities to the Imperial funds. This last provision might have had a good deal to do with the passing of the measures; but it was right to say that the Government did not put that forward as their main object. The noble Viscount the Secretary of State for India (Viscount Cross), then Home Secretary, stated very clearly on the second reading that the only object he had from beginning to end was to promote in the prisons of the country uniformity of discipline, punishment, and management, which he believed to be essential for the proper carrying out of the law; and also, if possible, a saving of cost. He did not wish to complicate the matter by referring to English experience further than by one remark. The noble Lord said that the average cost of the prisons in England was £592,000, and he anticipated that a saving might be effected of £100,000. The last Report of the Prison Commissioners put the cost at £430,000, and, therefore, the noble Viscount's anticipation had been more than satisfied. He mentioned this because it had a bearing on their experience in Scotland. The Scottish Act was avowedly proposed on the same principle and for the same objects, but in Scotland undue stress was being laid on centralization, and not upon those other objects. He found that even before the prisons were transferred, the Prison Commissioners for Scotland announced that they were of opinion that possibly six or seven district prisons might be found sufficient. The Commissioners had since acted on that footing, and had already reduced the number of prisons from 59 in 1876 to 20, and there were now Orders on the Table by the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Lothian) to still further reduce them. It was, therefore, clear that if any objection was to be taken to the realization of the Commissioners' project, now was the time to do so. He would state briefly the particular case to which he had to refer. The County of Fife was a populous County, with many mining, manufacturing, and other industries. There were two resident Sheriff Substitutes; and before the Prisons Act came into force there were two prisons, at Cupar and Dunfermline. As to these prisons, the Secretary of State had himself written officially to the Commissioners of Supply in August, 1880, that they were, without exception, the best arranged in Scotland, and effective in every respect. In spite of that opinion and of the protests of all the Local Authorities, the Dunfermline prison was closed in 1883, and notice had now been received that the one at Cupar was to be closed at the end of this month. Now, with regard to the prison at Cupar it was thoroughly efficient, especially in respect of economy, for he found that in 1887 the cost per prisoner all over Scotland was £24; in Cupar it was £22. The returns from prison labour reduced the net cost to

£16 10*s*. He could further quote the last Report of the Inspector and the unanimous feeling of the County and Burgh Authorities. It was clear, therefore, that in closing this prison the Government would be discontinuing a most efficient local institution, and a natural question was, what was the reason for closing it? The reason given by the Scotch Secretary, in reply to a communication from the Member for the district, was—

> "That the Government must act upon general principles in accordance with the spirit of the Act of 1877, the most material principle being the substitution of large general prisons for the small local prisons then existing."

But he did not find in the clauses of the Act or in the speech of the noble Viscount, from which he had already quoted, any statement of that principle; and the Lord Advocate, in introducing the Scottish Bill, limited the application of that principle to this statement—that in Scotland the number of prisons had already been reduced from 200 to 59 or 60 in 1877, and that there were still too many small local prisons. But, even assuming that the Commissioners had acted according to the intentions of the Act, he would ask whether their action had resulted in establishing a system that was more efficient and economical? The Commissioners themselves foresaw that certain inconveniences would arise, and they proposed that police cells should be provided in every town where the Sheriff held a Court for ordinary criminal judisdiction for the detention of untried prisoners and of persons serving short sentences. According to the system of criminal jurisdiction in Scotland, it was necessary for a prisoner to be brought very frequently before the Procurator Fiscal while the case was being got up, and it appeared to him that the result of this closing of prisons would be to give the criminals of Fife a number of excursions at the public expense. There was another side to this question, and that was the difficulty a prisoner would be put to in getting up his own case. Cells were generally licensed for a period not exceeding 14 days, but in a case of any importance it was unusual for a trial to come on within that period. Untried prisoners, therefore, would be removed from the neighbourhood of friends and advisers, and thus would be put to an unjust disadvantage. The institution of these police cells seemed to him to be reconstituting the very class of small prisons which the Lord Advocate took exception to in introducing the Bill in 1877. Besides the objections on the part of the localities in which prisons were being discontinued, there were also the objections taken by the localities where the large central stations were established, on the ground of the liberation of large numbers of prisoners in their midst, and the expense of the extra watching involved. Captain M'Hardy, Chief Constable of Lanarkshire, had stated in evidence that very serious danger was incurred by increasing the criminal classes in Glasgow, owing to those prisoners from all parts of Scotland being liberated at the gates of Barlinnie Prison. He added—

> "It is the most scandalous sight that any citizen of Glasgow can witness. The state of the road at 9 o'clock on a Saturday morning, when 40 or 50 of the lowest description of Glasgow roughs, and women who are out to meet them, are all hastening in a body along that road."

Similarly, in Edinburgh, the Annual Police Report stated that while crime had diminished the number of beggars had increased, and that this was due to the assembling in Edinburgh of a number of discharged prisoners unwilling to work, and who remained in Edinburgh instead of returning to their own districts. When they remembered that among the criminals liberated at the prison gates they had not only the hardened criminal, but every unfortunate who might happen to have been committed for a term exceeding 14 days, he ventured to think that the state of things could be described as scarcely less than a scandal, and did throw some doubt upon whether a system of centralized prison management was really superior to the system it had succeeded. His next point was one to which he would not have alluded had the noble Marquess postponed his order for closing Cupar Prison until it could have been discussed on the Estimates in the other House. As he had mentioned that the Prison Commissioners in England had effected a saving, if the Prison Commissioners of Scotland had been able to do something of the same kind there might have been a defence from that point of view; but he was afraid the facts were different.

In 1876 there were voted by Parliament for the Scottish prisons £35,700, and the amount raised locally was £44,900. In 1886 there was voted by Parliament £108,903; and though it was said that there had been a great many new buildings to account for this increased cost, it might be fairly retorted that possibly there might have been extravagance if they had been erected in substitution for local prisons. While, then, the English Commission showed a saving of £150,000, the Scottish Commission, on the contrary, showed a great increase—namely, from £80,000 to more than £100,000. Besides, this sum, while it included the cost of the conveyance of prisoners, did not include the cost of the increase of the Police Force, which fell partly upon the Constabulary Vote, and partly on local funds. In 1877, with 2,970 prisoners, the cost of the prisons came to £24 per prisoner; while in 1887, with 2,446 prisoners, the cost was £30 10*s.* per prisoner. It appeared to him that unless the noble Marquess could show that the facts and figures he had now given were without foundation, there was, indeed, ground for inquiry into the operation of an Act passed 10 years ago. The noble Marquess was bound to show that the administration of the Act had been proper, and was likely to result in an improvement of the system. It was somewhat singular that at the very moment when they were expecting a Local Government Bill, likely to increase the power and importance of the localities, they should have to be discussing a question of the discontinuance of certain local institutions, and to remember that the Bill of 1877 was opposed on the ground that it took away from and diminished the dignity of local life by two Gentlemen who, he might say, were now the mainstays of Her Majesty's Government—the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Member for West Birmingham. He admitted that great advantages might be obtained from uniformity of management and control, but he desired to direct the attention of the Secretary for Scotland to the consideration of whether it might not be possible to secure uniformity of management and, at the same time, to retain throughout the country those local prisons which were sufficiently well managed, and he was confident the Local Governments of the future would be content with nothing less.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (The Marquess of LOTHIAN) said, the speech of the noble Earl afforded a good illustration of the inconvenience, to a certain extent, of the custom of making speeches upon asking Questions in that House. The noble Earl's Question referred, generally speaking, to the management of the Prisons Commission in Scotland, and especially to the question of the closing of the prison of Cupar. But the noble Earl had gone over the whole question of the desirableness of amending the present system, which was to maintain large centralized prisons as against small ones. He had gone into questions of prison management. He had spoken of the administration of the prison at Barlinnie, and the disadvantages of the system of liberating prisoners at the prison gates, as against conveying them to the railway stations. He had gone into the question of how far the existence of the prison of Edinburgh had increased the criminal population there; and he had gone into the question of the cost of the new prisons. He, therefore, felt somewhat at a loss to know where to begin in answer to the noble Earl. He had better take the general question, as to whether it was desirable to have large centralized prisons, or the small local prisons that existed before 1877? Upon that question he thought the noble Earl had granted that it was not only a question of economy which actuated Parliament in 1877, and had distinctly stated the other reasons which prompted the noble Viscount (Viscount Cross) in introducing the Bill. Parliament was so unanimous on the subject that they passed the English Bill with a majority of no less than 210, and the Bill for Scotland was passed without a Division at all. The noble Earl said it was his duty to inquire into the working of that Act, and see whether it was a desirable measure or not. He must repudiate that suggestion altogether. Government would be simply impossible if every Minister were to inquire into the working of every Act after the lapse of a few years. But they had some light on the subject indirectly, for the Royal Commission on Irish Prisons, in their Report of 1884, had condemned the system of numerous small local prisons in Ireland. Their Report was published seven years after the passing of the Act which the noble Earl complained of, and the Irish Commissioners had before them the results of those seven years' experience before they came to that conclusion. They said—

> "We are convinced that the fact of there being such a large number of local prisons in Ireland, and the consequently small number of prisoners in most of them, lies at the root of the principal defects of the existing administration. . . . . . Whether, therefore, we study economy of public money, or economy of the time and labour of superintending authorities; whether we regard the efficiency and contentment of prison officers of all grades; or whether we turn to the discipline, reformation, and legitimate wants of the prisoners, we are alike convinced that a reduction of the number of Irish local prisons and the concentration of the prisoners in fewer and larger prisons are indispensable conditions for the introduction of those improvements which are most urgently required in the present system."

For himself, therefore, he was not prepared to go back upon the principle affirmed by the Act of 1877. With reference to the prison of Cupar, he did not wish to say a single word against it. It was an efficient prison. Its management was good; but it had been found unsuitable in respect of accommodation for the laundry trade, and wanting in means for the proper separation of male and female prisoners. The noble Earl's speech would have conveyed the impression that Cupar Prison was a large prison. It was not a large prison. The average number confined in it was about 33, and even some of those had been sent from districts outside the county of Fife for the purpose of maintaining the laundry trade. Cupar was smaller than the smallest prison either in England or Wales with one exception, that of Brecon, and the Prison Commissioners had had to deal with it in the general spirit of the Act of 1877. The noble Earl had quoted from a letter of the Secretary of State of 1880, in which it was stated that Cupar Prison was one of the best in the country; but the noble Earl had omitted to read the concluding part of that letter, which went on to say that Cupar Prison might eventually be closed in accordance with the general principle of the Act of 1877; and in a subsequent letter it was said that if this took place, and the Commissioners of Supply memorialized the Home Office to license police cells at Cupar, favourable consideration would be given to the case. This was said eight years ago, and it was precisely the position taken up by himself (the Secretary for Scotland) now. He adhered altogether to the undertaking then given by the Secretary of State, and should now be prepared to carry out those arrangements. As to the alleged inconvenience to prisoners getting up their defence, he had consulted one of the Prison Governors in Scotland—a gentleman well acquainted both with the old system and the new—and he was unable to point to a single instance of a prisoner being put to the slightest disadvantage by transference to a prison outside his district, nor had any such case been brought under the notice of the Secretary for Scotland. With respect to the noble Earl's remarks as to the inconvenience of discharging prisoners at Barlinnie, he had only to say that, if this course were not adopted, it would be necessary to take the prisoners to Glasgow and discharge them there—a course which would involve a fresh difficulty as to the place of discharge, and would also occasion a serious increase of expense, as the present system cost only £400 per annum, whereas that proposal would probably cost £1,000. With respect to the case of Edinburgh, where, according to the noble Earl, crime had increased in consequence of the discharge there of prisoners sent from country districts, he had to say that, in the year 1886, only 240 of those prisoners who came from outside Edinburgh declined the offer of tickets with which to return to the places where they were tried; moreover, some of these discharged prisoners, although sentenced elsewhere, belonged to Edinburgh, and naturally preferred to remain there when set at liberty. He hardly thought that the facts supported the contention of the noble Earl that the new system increased the criminal population of Edinburgh. Then as to the cost, if the noble Earl's statement were correct, it was, no doubt, a serious consideration; but, on the whole, after careful inquiry, he found that by the new system, when properly compared with the old one, there was a saving of £13,000 or £14,000 a-year. Since the Act was passed the salaries of prison officers had, of course, gone on increasing by the annual increments allowed by the Treasury scale of pay; moreover, a decision of their Lordships' House, "Mullins *v.* Treasurer of County of Surrey," had thrown upon the Prison Commissioners the expense, which amounted to £2,000 a-year, of conveying prisoners to prison from the place of their trial, which up to the year 1881 had been defrayed by the several county authorities. In addition to this an annual sum of £1,000, previously paid by the Exchequer, was now paid by the Prison Commissioners. It was quite fallacious to estimate the cost of prison administration by the charge per prisoner, because the larger the number of prisoners the smaller would be the cost per head for their maintenance; and he was happy to say that the number of prisoners had of late years, owing to the spread of education and the decrease of intoxication, greatly diminished. But he thought that some of the credit for this diminution of crime was due to the more efficient management of the prisons. He thought he had replied to all the points raised by the noble Earl, and, in conclusion, could only say that he felt himself obliged to adhere to the system which had been so many years in force, and that he could hold out no hope that the order under which Cupar Prison would be closed on the 31st would be revoked.

THE SOUDAN—KHARTOUM.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

THE EARL OF DUNDONALD, in rising to ask Her Majesty's Government the latest news received of Lupton Bey from Khartoum, and if any steps had recently been taken to communicate with him; also to ask Her Majesty's Government what measures they are taking to pacify the Soudan and produce a friendly feeling with the Natives? said, that that gallant Englishman, Lupton Bey, had had a remarkable career. A mate of a small coasting vessel in the Red Sea in 1878, he was taken by Gordon to Khartoum and placed in charge of the Nile flotilla. He showed such intelligence and integrity that Gordon promoted him to be Governor of the Bahr Gazelle. When he took over the Governorship there was an annual deficit. He soon turned this deficit into a surplus of £30,000 a-year, which he sent to Egypt; and when the rebellion broke out he had £150,000 worth of ivory in store. He defended his post to the last, and only submitted when his garrison were *in extremis.* This was the record of service of our gallant countryman now imprisoned at Khartoum, and he hoped Her Majesty's Government were using every means available to obtain his release. Lupton Bey's mother, he had heard, was in great anxiety and grief lest her son should be put to death. As regarded the policy of Her Majesty's Government for the pacification of the Soudan, that was a question of the first and gravest importance, involving, as it did, the welfare of a vast area of country which stretched over 20 degrees of latitude and 14 degrees of longitude, with its immense population—a question which concerned the whole north-east central portion of the South African Continent and its rescue from barbarism. He would only briefly allude to the incidents which had caused the present deplorable state of things in the Soudan, and for this purpose he would quote half-a-dozen lines from a letter written by the late correspondent of *The Times* at Khartoum. Mr. Frank Power wrote on February 14, 1884, in this significant and scathing manner—

> "The Soudani and Arabs are splendid fellows, ground down and robbed by every ruffian who has money enough (ill-gotten) to buy himself the position of Pasha. For years it has been 'Kourbash, kourbash, et toujours kourbash.' This gets monotonous and the poor devils rebel. The rebels are in the right, and God and chance seem to be fighting for them."

He would now only rapidly go through those events which had occurred during the rebellion caused by the abominable conduct he had alluded to. There was the battle of Kashgir, where Hicks's Army of 10,000 men, led astray by false guides and wandering about for three days without water, was set upon by myriads and totally annihilated—the gallant Hicks, with his English staff, spurring into the ranks of the Arab spearmen and meeting a soldier's death—to the defeat of Baker's Army, the battles of Teb and Tamanieb, to the Nile Expedition, the battles of Abu Klea and Gubat, to the fall of Khartoum and the death of Gordon, to the battles of Suakin, and, later on, that of the Nile.

It had been computed that about 200,000 persons had been killed in this rebellion, and we had to deplore the loss of many of our countrymen. Such a record as this the history of few countries, however troubled, could show, and he believed he was right when he said that thinking men of all nations had been pained at the knowledge of all this slaughter and at the state of chaos now existing. But much as the civilized world felt for this state of things, it was England and English feeling that was alone able to bring peace and civilization. There were, in his opinion—and he said it with all due deference—only two policies which this country could adopt. The one policy, and the right one, would be to recognize that when we interfered in the affairs of Egypt we incurred a responsibility towards the Soudan—a responsibility which implied the placing of Governors in the country who should administer justice and maintain peace among the warring elements by which the Soudan was now divided. This policy would entail an armed force, and he was told that this country would never incur the expense. If this were so, as the country was master, its will was law. But there remained another policy—that of letting the Soudanese entirely alone to manage their affairs and to govern themselves, to foster trade, and to trust to it and other influences and to time for the introduction of civilization. But our policy had been one neither like the first he had mentioned nor like the second. It had been a policy of fighting a bloody battle and then retiring. He could not find better words with which to describe our policy than "kill and retire." Such a policy was not dignified. It neither conduced to the honour of this country nor to the welfare of the people, There were hopes a short time back that this kill and retire policy was at an end. But after 18 months of peace, after 18 months during which the outposts at Suakin had not been fired upon, during which officers at Suakin could go out shooting for 20 or 25 miles into the interior without molestation, so long—and this was a point worthy of notice—as they wore the English helmet and not the Egyptian tarbush, when trade was increasing, when cattle were being brought in and sold by the Native tribes, there took place a sudden change. In December last an expedition was got together at Suakin for the purpose of attacking Tahar, which was 40 miles off. Tahar was the great grain and cattle district of that part of the Soudan. This expedition was formed of friendly Armars, Hadendowahs, slaves from the town, and other such persons from Suakin. The expedition arrived in the neighbourhood of Tahar, but the looting propensities of a portion of this motley force were too strong for its cohesion. Some of the friendlies began to loot the cattle of the Hadendowahs, and these cattle happened to belong to the very tribe who were forming part of the expedition. These, naturally enraged at their conduct, knowing that if they submitted they would not see much more of their cattle, joined with the Baggaras in driving the Suakin force away, which they did with considerable slaughter. Since that day no peace had reigned in the Suakin district, no officer could go out shooting or beyond the fortifications, and everything had been disturbed; while at other coast ports, where no hostilities had taken place, everything was quiet. In January an expedition was sent out to take Osman Digna at Handoub, a hamlet some 12 miles from Suakin. Osman Digna and his force were driven out, but he rallied his men, returned to the attack, and defeated the Suakin force. It was during this engagement that the gallant Governor was wounded, and also another English officer in Egyptian employ. Another skirmish took place this month in which an English officer, Colonel Tapp, a gallant officer whose death was a great loss, was killed. These raids were not desirable. They were conducted under Egyptian auspices, and the Soudanese, not unnaturally, imagined that their object was to annex their tribal lands, with the intention of re-imposing upon them the hated yoke of Egypt, with its bondage and terrible taxation. They, therefore, resisted to the very utmost of their power. A great evil in these sorties was that they encouraged in the minds of numbers of friendlies and persons at Suakin a desire for a raid for the purpose of enjoying a participation in the loot that might be obtained. In some cases the loot obtained was very considerable, amounting to thousands of pounds sterling. His idea of the policy which should be pursued towards the

Soudan, if the policy of responsibility for its proper government was not entertained, was a policy which would forbid all raids or hostilities unless there was necessity for them for the purpose of defence, a policy which should issue Proclamations in the Native Arabic to the people informing them that England had no intention of attacking them, had no intention of helping Egypt to conquer their territory, and only wished to establish good relations with them. Such a Proclamation should be distributed far and wide, should be sent by camels to Berber and Khartoum and far-off provinces. Such a Proclamation, he was told, would be attended with the most beneficial results; but it should be sent through our English Consul at Suakin, and not through Egyptian channels. He did not believe the Soudanese would place any confidence in a Proclamation emanating from Egypt. Take a case which was sufficient to destroy all confidence. Hicks's Army wished to cross from Suakin to Berber. The Hadendowahs were engaged to provide camels for the transport of the force. They fulfilled their contract, doubtless, losing many camels and undergoing many privations. They were promised seven dollars for each camel—not outrageous pay, surely, for this arduous journey, but when they had done their work, instead of the seven dollars promised, they received for payment one dollar. Did not this show very good reason why the tribes should place little confidence in Egyptian promises? He could not help feeling that it was his duty to say what he thought on this matter. More especially did it come home to him when he considered the large areas of desert strewn with the whitened bones of the slain, and when he thought of the great numbers of officers and men of the English Army who now lay beneath the desert sands, and whose death required, in his opinion, some justification by the improvement and pacification of the land in which they fought. And yet another consideration weighed with him of far more importance than even the loss of all these lives, and that was that the honour of this country was bound up in the adoption of measures to civilize the Soudan. Otherwise history would say she had sadly neglected her duty.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): With respect to the first part of the noble and gallant Lord's Question I have not very much to say, and if I could say much I ought not to say it. As a matter of fact, the last communication we had from him was an undated note which reached our outposts last November, and since that time we have had no communication with him. We believe that he is well, but as to the chances of escape I will not venture to speculate. I need not say that we shall do all that we can, to procure his release, as opportunity may offer; but I should be doing the reverse of my duty if I entered into details upon the subject. The noble and gallant Earl has travelled over a very extensive field, and dealt with events which arose in times for which Her Majesty's present Government are in no way responsible. I am not going to express an opinion as to the acts of our Predecessors. All I will say is that when the responsibility of affairs came to us we found matters in this condition. The British troops had retired from the Soudan; Lord Granville had imposed on the Egyptian Government the policy of abandoning the Soudan, on the ground that they were not in a position to keep it, but he had promised the assistance of the Government to maintain the boundary at Assouan on the Nile, and also to retain Suakin on the Red Sea. That policy, on the ground of continuity of policy, which I have more than once urged upon this House, we have pursued. The British Army is now, I think, almost exclusively confined to the North of Egypt. Suakin, however, has some British troops stationed there. We do not depart in any degree from the policy of leaving the Soudan. As to the civilization which the noble and gallant Earl would impose upon us the duty of restoring, it could only be carried out by a large and costly expedition, entailing enormous sacrifice of blood and treasure, and for the present a continuous expenditure, which I do not think the people of this country would sanction. With respect to the individual cases of collision which have taken place in the neighbourhood of Suakin, there are two points which I think the noble and gallant Earl has forgotten. One is that that very policy of abstention applies equally to the tribes called friendly and to those opposed to us. We could not, without a far larger force, restrain the friendlies from pursuing such a course as they think fit in the conduct of their desert warfare. The second point is that a defensive position does not necessarily mean constantly standing behind a wall. It is often necessary to attack an offensive position set up outside. I do not believe that anything has been done under the sanction of any British officer which can be described in other language than that it is part of the measures necessary for the defence of Suakin.

THE EARL OF DUNDONALD: If my memory is correct, I especially excepted measures taken for the defence of our position; I alluded only to attacks on distant places.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I doubt whether the noble and gallant Earl will find that British officers have been employed in these distant attacks. I do not take the optimist view which the noble and gallant Earl has taken of the temper and disposition of the tribes at Suakin. I do not think that any Proclamation from Her Majesty's Government will induceOsman Digna to abstain from his attacks upon Suakin. The disturbing cause is the Slave Trade. No appeals simply to Osman Digna's good feeling, or to his desire for better trade, would prevent him from attacking when he sees an opportunity open. The defence of our retention of Suakin is that it is a very serious obstacle to the renewal and the conduct of that Slave Trade which is always trying to press over from Africa into Asia. I do not think that the retention of Suakin is of any advantage to the Egyptian Government. If I were to speak purely from the point of view of that Government's own interest, I should say "Abandon Suakin at once." But the retention of Suakin is of very considerable value for the purpose of repressing the Slave Trade. The Soudan is the one spot in the whole world where the Slave Trade has still the greatest vitality, and if your supervision is relaxed it will be revived in all its ancient force. The evil is not confined to that narrow strip of coast or to the desert of the Soudan. The whole mechanism by which the flower of every tribe in the heart of Africa is drawn down for the purpose of satisfying the slave markets of Arabia, Asia Minor, and other countries still exists, and that machinery would be stimulated into activity at once by the knowledge that there is this outlet to the traffic. That is the difficulty with which we have to contend, and I am afraid until the practice of the Slave Trade is abandoned the peace for which the noble and gallant Earl sighs will not be restored.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY said, he thought the noble and gallant Earl was justified in asking for some information; but he entirely accepted the statement of policy made by the noble Marquess, that we occupied Suakin for the purpose of dealing with the Slave Trade, and that our occupation was necessary for that object. He was glad to hear the policy of the Government was not to go beyond the defence of Suakin. Judging from the information in the newspapers, he thought the operations at Suakin had gone beyond what was originally intended. He believed there was some danger in the desire of the Egyptian Government to make use of the friendly tribes in operations against the unfriendly, and that that policy was going too far. It was very much to be desired that trade might revive, especially on the banks of the Nile.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I speak from recollection, but my impression is that the hindrance on our side to a renewal of trade along the Nile has been for some time withdrawn. With respect to Suakin, the control of the town is in the hands of the Egyptian Government, under Colonel Kitchener, who is not an English but an Egyptian officer, and that, to a certain extent, diminishes our influence, I will not say over the general policy, but over the details of individual action.

THE EASTER RECESS.—QUESTION.

In reply to the Earl of KIMBERLEY,

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY) said, that he proposed practically that the House should adjourn that day week for Easter; but he was not sure that it would be possible actually to adjourn on that day, because there might be some financial measures which must be passed before the 31st of March. Of course, the Government would take no contentious Business after that day week. He proposed that their Lordships should re-assemble again on Friday in Easter week, April 13.

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT.

Message from the Commons to acquaint this House that they have directed the Select Committee appointed by them to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament to meet the Committee appointed by their Lordships in Room No. 1, Upper Corridor, on Thursday next at Twelve of the clock:

Ordered, That the Committee appointed by this House do meet the Committee appointed by the Commons in Room No. 1, Upper Corridor, on *Thursday* next at Twelve of the clock.

The Lord Basing named of the Committee in the place of the Lord Colville of Culross.

POOR LAW RELIEF.

Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire as to the various powers now in possession of the Poor Law guardians, and their adequacy to cope with distress that may from time to time exist in the metropolis and other populous places; and also as to the expediency of concerted action between the Poor Law authorities and voluntary agencies for the relief of distress."—(*The Viscount Gordon, E. Aberdeen.*)

Motion *agreed to*.

House adjourned at a quarter before Eight o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 16*th March*, 1886.

The House met at Two of the clock.

MINUTES.]—Supply—*considered in Committee Resolutions* [March 15] *reported.*

Ways and Means—*considered in Committee*—£114,900 7*s*. 4*d*.; £11,704,603, Consolidated Fund.

Private Bill (*by Order*) — *Second Reading* — South - Eastern Metropolitan (Lewisham, Greenwich, and District Tramways).*

Public Bills — *Ordered* — *First Reading* — Handloom Weavers (Ireland) * [175]; Land Perpetuity (Ireland) * [176]; Coroners' Elections * [178]; Corn Returns * [177]; Army (Annual) * [179].

Second Reading—National Debt (Conversion) [164].

QUESTIONS.

PRESUMPTION OF LIFE LIMITATION (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1881.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether, in view of his statement on the 10th of August, 1887, it is his intention at an early date to introduce a Bill for the amendment of "The Presumption of Life Limitation (Scotland) Act, 1881?"

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I hope to be able to introduce a Bill to amend the Act of 1881, referred to by the hon. Member; but I am unable to give any definite undertaking.

LABOURERS' ACTS, 1885-1886—ULSTER BOARDS OF GUARDIANS.

Mr. MULHOLLAND (Londonderry, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a fact that, in Ulster, previous to the 31st of March, 1887, the Boards of Guardians had not carried out a single improvement scheme under the Labourers' Acts of 1885 and 1886; whether it is also a fact that, at the present time, only one scheme has been set on foot in County Antrim, two in County Cavan, one in County Monaghan, and none in the remaining counties of Ulster; and, whether it is the intention of the Government to take action, either by legislation or otherwise, for the purpose of securing decent houses with allotments to deserving labourers in Ireland, by providing for the proper administration of these Acts?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The facts are as stated in the first two paragraphs, with the exception that a scheme was set on foot in the County Donegal in Ballyshannon Union, but which fell through. As regards the last portion of the Question, it cannot be said, so far as Ireland in general is concerned, that the Labourers' Acts have failed in their professed object of providing better dwellings for agricultural labourers and their families, although in the case of Ulster the number of applications has been limited. Since the Acts first came into operation, in 1883, the Local Government Board have authorized the provision of 10,040 houses, while applications in regard to 2,158 are now under consideration. It is competent for ratepayers to make representations as to the want of labourers' dwellings in any district or as to the unsanitary condition of those which exist; and the Guardians, if satisfied of the truth of the representations, shall make schemes for the improvement of the district.

WAR OFFICE—WOOLWICH ARSENAL—SUPERANNUATION.

Colonel **HUGHES** (Woolwich) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether artizans and labourers in Woolwich Arsenal, prior to 1859, were entitled to superannuation after 15 years' service, under the ordnance scale; on what section of the Superannuation Act, 1859, the War Office relies for any abolition of superannuation to the same class; why, if the War Office thought in 1860 that superannuation was abolished to this class, did they recommend 790 men of this class subsequently for superannuation; on what clause of the Superannuation Act Amendment Act of 1873 do the War Office Authorities rely for any distinction to be made during the period 1861 to 1870; and, what is the reason for any distinction?

The **SECRETARY of STATE** (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Before 1859 artizans and labourers in Woolwich Arsenal had no right to superannuation; but after 20 years' service they could receive a small pension under Regulations made by the Board of Ordnance. Such persons were excluded from the benefit of the Superannuation Act, 1859, by Clause 17, as not holding certificates from the Civil Service Commission; and they were specifically excluded under Clause 2 by a Treasury decision, as belonging to a class of persons in receipt of full market rate of wages. The 790 men were recommended for superannuation because the Treasury Regulations had not been issued until 1861, and, until their issue, the men might have had reason to suppose that steps would be taken to qualify them under the Act of 1859. Clause 1 of the Superannuation Act of 1873 rules that there must have been inadvertence on the part of the Heads of the Department in not obtaining the Civil Service certificate. This inadvertence could only have extended to 1861 (when the Treasury Regulations were promulgated) so far as the War Office was concerned. I answer these Questions out of courtesy to my hon. and gallant Friend; but I cannot undertake to discuss in this manner, and in further detail, the subject of a Motion which stands in his name for Tuesday.

ARMY MEDICAL SERVICE (INDIA)—"HALF STAFF" ALLOWANCES.

Sir **WALTER FOSTER** (Derby, Ilkeston) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether an executive officer of the Medical Staff in India, who officiated for less than one month as Deputy Surgeon General, in the absence of the Deputy Surgeon General on sick leave or furlough, receives no allowances for the period, although he performed the duties in addition to his other duties; whether, in such an instance, the "half-staff" of the appointment reverts to the State; whether the acting officer would be held pecuniarily liable in the event of loss of stores or other mistakes; and, whether officers officiating on the Military (Combatant) Staff, in a similar way, draw the half-staff for the broken periods; and, if so, why the difference is made in the case of medical officers?

The **UNDER SECRETARY of STATE** (Sir John Gorst) (Chatham): No reply has yet been received to the despatch on the subject, which was addressed to the Government of India in July last. The Secretary of State will call the attention of the Government of India to the delay which has taken place.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—MR. CECIL ROCHE.

Mr. **DILLON** (Mayo, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Mr. Cecil Roche, a temporary R.M., dismissable on three months' notice, has recently been promoted to the permanent staff over the heads of his seniors; and, whether the names of Resident Magistrates have been this year for the first time published alphabetically, instead of in order of seniority, as was the practice for 50 years; and, if so, for what object was the change made?

The **PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY** (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: Mr. Roche has recently been made a permanent Resident Magistrate on the occurrence of a vacancy, which was the intention when he was originally appointed, as his previous training seemed to fully qualify him for the appointment, he having been a barrister of some years standing, and also a legal Sub-Commissioner. It is the case that some of the temporary Resident Magistrates had been originally appointed as such a short time before him. The names of Resident Magistrates have not been this year for the first time published alphabetically; such a list has always been published. The seniority list is one which is used for Departmental purposes.

Mr. DILLON: Will the right hon. and gallant Gentleman state at what date Mr. Roche was appointed, and for what reason he was appointed over the heads of seniors; and, also, whether it is true that the seniority list which used to be published in the Directory has now been superseded, and replaced by an alphabetical list?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: The hon. Member did not ask in his original Question when Mr. Roche was appointed. He asked whether he was recently made a permanent Resident Magistrate: As to the question of the seniority list, it has always, I believe, been kept for Departmental purposes.

Mr. DILLON: I beg to give Notice that I shall put a further Question on the Paper in reference to this matter.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—OUTRAGE AT THE NATIONAL SCHOOL, LACKFOODRA.

Mr. POWELL-WILLIAMS (Birmingham, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is true, as stated in the public Press, that about noon on the 13th instant three armed and disguised men entered the National School at Lackfoodra, and in the presence of the school children, having compelled the schoolmaster, Patrick Robinson, and his daughters to go down on their knees first, fired a shot from a pistol over the head of the elder daughter, and then shot Robinson himself in the groin, inflicting a serious wound; whether, if the facts are as stated, he can inform the House what was the motive of the crime; and, whether the offenders are likely to be brought to justice?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: It is the case that three armed men, one of them disguised, entered the National Schoolhouse on the occasion referred to. They ordered Mr. Robinson and his two daughters to go on their knees, which they accordingly did. The disguised man then presented the pistol at the face of one of the daughters. He endeavoured to fire it three or four times, but it missed. He snapped it again, when the shot went off, grazing the girl's face. He then took a gun from one of the other men, and discharged the contents at Mr. Robinson, striking him on the lower part of the abdomen, which is riddled with shot. They then left. The police have not yet ascertained the motive. They are making every effort to identify the perpetrators of the outrage.

CONSULAR CORRESPONDENCE—OFFICIAL POSTAGES.

Mr. THOMAS (Glamorgan, E.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether it is true, as stated in *The Shipping World*, for March, 1888, that Her Majesty's Consular Officers

> "Are obliged to send letters to their correspondents without paying postage thereon, with an apology that they are unable to do so because no allowance is made by the Government for that purpose;"

and, whether it is true, as stated by *The Shipping World*, that no allowance is made by the Government

> "To cover postage upon Correspondence arising out of, and in connection with, the official position of such Consular Officers?"

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): The statement is incorrect. No fixed allowances are made to cover postages; but accounts of expenditure on account of official postages are sent in periodically, and are paid when passed.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—LIMERICK ASSIZES—OMISSION OF THE MAYOR FROM THE COMMISSION.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.) (for Mr. W. Abraham) (Limerick, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Why the name of the Mayor was omitted from the Commission for the Assizes recently held in Limerick; who is the official responsible for this omission; and, by what authority has a time-honoured custom been departed from in this instance?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman)

(Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: There has been no exceptional course taken in the case of the Commission for the Limerick Assizes. The Mayors of municipal towns are not now included in the Commissions of Assize. There did not exist a custom of including Mayors in such Commissions, but it had become practically unmeaning; and, after full consideration, it has been abandoned in the case of all Commissions of Assize in Ireland.

MR. DILLON: Since when was this custom abandoned?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: Within the last two years.

NATIONAL DEBT (CONVERSION) BILL —TRUSTEES' ACCOUNTS.

MR. S. HOARE (Norwich) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether in the event of there being only one denomination of Government Stock, facilities will be given to Trustees and others to have more than one account in that Stock in the same name or names?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's Hanover Square): Yes, Sir; it is proposed to allow one holder to have as many as four separate accounts in the new Stock, which will place him in a better position than he is at present. Perhaps the hon. Member for Wandsworth (Mr. Kimber) will take this as an answer to the Question he has put down for Monday.

THE LONDON LABOUR MARKET—IMMIGRATION OF DESTITUTE ALIENS.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If he can now state whether he has been able to make any arrangement for instructing Her Majesty's Consuls abroad that, pending such legislation as may result from the Report of the Committee about to be appointed to inquire into the question of the immigration of destitute aliens, they should, as far as lies in their power, inform intending immigrants of the overcrowded state of the labour market in the Metropolis, and should warn them against coming to England?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.), in reply, said, the Secretary of State had, before taking action, to advise with other Departments of the Government. A Return on the subject of Foreign Immigration was prepared last Session; but its presentation was delayed, owing to the necessity of obtaining further information. It would, however, be in the hands of Members in a few days.

EPPING FOREST—PROSECUTION OF GIPSIES.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, in view of the fact that the prosecution in July last (of certain gipsies infesting Epping Forest, and carrying on the unlawful practices of blackmailing, extortion, and assault) was obviously undertaken in the public interest; and, whether, inasmuch as he has admitted the said prosecution to be "a necessary one and useful in the interests of the public," he will recommend that the costs amounting to £45 be paid out of funds available for the purpose and distributed by the Public Prosecutor?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.), in reply, said, he was not aware of the occasion on which he had made the admission suggested by the hon. Member, nor did he think he had given any promise such as that mentioned in the Question. What he did promise was that he would make application to the Treasury, and he had done so; but he found that the existing Rule governing such cases prevented any action being taken. He had no power to direct the Public Prosecutor to take action.

POST OFFICE—OFFICIALS AT POLITICAL MEETINGS.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether his attention has been called to the fact that Mr. J. F. Wight, of the Money Order Department, General Post Office, presided at a political meeting of the Primrose League in the Lecture Hall, St. Aubyn's Road, Upper Norwood, at which, among others present upon the platform, were the hon. members for Croydon, Norwood, Dulwich, East Bradford, &c.; and, whether Members of the Post Office Staff who belong to other Political Associations will be allowed a similar liberty?

Mr. BYRON REED (Bradford, E.) asked the right hon. Gentleman whether, in his opinion, there was not a wide distinction to be drawn between political meetings of a legal and loyal character, and political meetings of an illegal and disloyal character?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The Question, in the language in which it is put, is out of Order, and deals with a matter of opinion.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster) (who replied) said: I explained last night the view of the Government in regard to the Question which the hon. Gentleman has addressed to me. I do not think I should be acting fairly to a large body of very efficient public servants if I departed from the position which I then laid down. I think no arrangement should be made rashly or hastily in reference to a very large body of useful Civil servants.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—PURCHASERS.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) (for Mr. Lea) (Londonderry, S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, How many purchasers under the Irish Land Act of 1870 have availed themselves of the full benefits of the legislation of last year; in the majority of cases how long will the payment of their instalments extend; and how many are in arrear?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds N.): I am informed that out of 821 borrowers under the Act of 1870, 745 have accepted the reduced terms of 4 per cent annuity under sub-section 1 of section 24 of the Act of 1887, obtaining thereby an extension of the period of repayment, ranging from 40 to 47½ years from the time of the original advance; 16 have elected to continue payment on the original terms; four have made application for the further extension of term contemplated in special cases by sub-section 2 of the same clause; 56 are in arrear of instalments to the 1st of May last.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): Could the hon. Gentleman state the amount of arrears?

Mr. JACKSON: Sir, I have not got the figure here.

FISHERIES (SCOTLAND)—LEGISLATION.

Mr. THORBURN (Peebles and Selkirk) asked the Lord Advocate, If the Fishing Bill promised by the Government will be introduced before Easter; and, if not, looking to the great interest taken in the matter in many districts in Scotland, whether he can give a definite promise when the Bill will be introduced and printed?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The Bill referred to cannot be introduced before Easter; but I hope it may be on Parliament re-assembling.

AFRICA (WEST COAST)—KING JA JA.

Sir ROBERT FOWLER (London) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he will shortly lay upon the Table Papers showing what the course taken by Her Majesty's Consul on the Oil river and the Admiral commanding the Cape and West Coast of Africa Station has been, and the various reasons which have actuated Her Majesty's Government in sanctioning the removal of King Ja Ja from Opobo?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): The Papers will be presented as soon as they can be prepared. Directions were given some days ago.

THE DISTURBANCES IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE—THE MILITARY.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, By whose order the military were called out on the occasion of an assembly in Trafalgar Square on the 13th of November last?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): The actual request that the military might be sent into Trafalgar Square on the day in question was made to the officer in command by the Chief Commissioner of Police. On the day previous, I had requested the War Office to have certain troops in readiness in the event of emergency.

Mr. PICKERSGILL asked, whether it was not a fact that the right hon. Gentleman was in attendance in the neighbourhood at the time; and whether the orders to call out the military were given with his express sanction?

Mr. MATTHEWS: No, Sir; I am informed that it was not an order, but a request, for the military to appear.

THE DISTURBANCES IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE—THE POLICE (INJURIES.)

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he will lay upon the Table of the House a Return of the 77 policemen alleged to have been injured on Sunday, the 13th of November last, giving in each case the name and number of the policeman, the nature of the injury, and the time and place at which it was sustained?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): If the hon. Member will move for this Return there will be no objection to grant it.

MALTA—THE NEW CONSTITUTION—THE PAPERS.

Mr. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Why the promised Papers on the granting a new Constitution to Malta have not been presented to Parliament; when they will be ready; and, under what Vote in the Civil Service Estimates the expenses in connection with the Boundary Commission will be charged?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): As I stated in reply to my hon. Friend on the 6th instant, the Papers were presented to Parliament on the 23rd ultimo. They will, I believe, be ready for distribution in about a fortnight. I informed the House on the 27th ultimo that the expenses connected with the Boundary Commission will be defrayed from Malta Funds.

THE WEST LONDON COMMERCIAL BANK.

Mr. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) asked Mr. Attorney General, Whether he can explain why no dividend has been paid to the depositors in the "West London Commercial Bank," which stopped payment on the 7th of February last year; whether he will make inquiries of the official liquidator as to the reason why the first dividend of 8*s.* 6*d.* in the pound, which has been announced as available, is not forthcoming; and, whether he is aware that the delay has already resulted in one suicide, one or more deaths, and great distress generally among the depositors?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir Edward Clarke) (Plymouth) (who replied) said: On behalf of my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General, I have to say that the circumstances of the liquidation of the West London Commercial Bank were as follows:—The official liquidator was appointed on the 17th of March, 1887. The creditors' claims were to be sent in by the 9th of July, 1887; 1,061 claims were sent in which had to be examined, involving many important questions and much detail. The certificate adjudicating on 1,019 of such claims, amounting to £137,265, was made on the 8th of February, 1888. The order for payment of a dividend of 8*s.* 6*d.* in the pound was made on the 28th of February, and the cheques for the whole of this amount were prepared, signed, and issued on the 12th of March. We have no information as to the painful circumstances suggested in the last paragraph of the hon. Member's Question; but the facts I have stated will show that there has been no delay to which such circumstance could be referred.

Mr. CREMER asked, whether the hon. and learned Gentleman could explain why the official liquidator had limited the dividend to 8*s.* 6*d.* in the pound, when he had admitted that he had more than enough to pay 10*s.* in the pound?

Sir EDWARD CLARKE said, he was unable to say what were the exact reasons which influenced the official liquidator in thinking it would be only wise to pay at the present moment a dividend of 8*s.* 6*d.* instead of 10*s.*; but the difference would not account for the painful circumstances suggested.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION—REPORT OF COMMISSION ON ELEMENTARY EDUCATION.

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the Royal Commission on Elementary Education intend to present a preliminary Report on Technical Education?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The Question has been sent to the Secretary of the Commission, and the Chairman will bring it forward for the consideration of the Commission at their next meeting, which will take place next week.

PARLIAMENT—OFFICES OF PROFIT—VACATION OF SEATS.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, in view of the fact that, on the 15th of April, 1887, when speaking of the appointment of the Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, he stated "distinctly that no salary or profit is attached to the office," and that Her Majesty's Attorney General for England stated immediately afterwards that, in consequence of this, it was not necessary for the right hon. and gallant Member for Thanet to vacate his seat in Parliament, it is intended, on the passing of the Bill, to confer a salary of £1,000 per annum on the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, that he shall vacate his seat?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I must ask the hon. and learned Gentleman to wait until the Bill is in the hands of Members, which, I hope, will be next week.

MR. J. E. ELLIS: I am not learned.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I beg the hon. Gentleman's pardon.

LONDON COAL AND WINE DUTIES CONTINUANCE.

MR. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he is aware that the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), when Chancellor of the Exchequer, replying on behalf of the Government to the deputation from the Metropolitan Board of Works on the subject of the Coal and Wine Dues, in 1886, used these words—

> "Undoubtedly, if it should become evident that a very large majority of the people of the Metropolis, a large and predominant majority, were in favour of a renewal of these duties, then the present attitude of the Government towards that proposal, which I will venture to define as an attitude of rigid financial precision, undoubtedly that present attitude might certainly be modified;

whether he is aware that the majority of the Representatives of the people of the Metropolis are in favour of the renewal of the Coal and Wine Duties; and, whether, in view of that fact, the Government will modify their present attitude of rigid financial precision?

MR. FIRTH (Dundee) said, before the right hon. Gentleman answered the Question, he should like to know whether his attention had been drawn to the Report of the Select Committee on Public Petitions, presented last year, from which it appeared that the Petitions sent in against the Coal and Wine Dues numbered 69,335, and were, for the most part, genuine; while the Petitions in favour of the dues contained evidence of extensive frauds, and were obtained by the agency of the Corporation of the City of London, who were the promoters of the Bill for continuing the dues?

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck) asked, whether the dues did not amount to 3*s*. or 4*s*. a-ton, and were not practically prohibitive for manufacturing purposes?

MR. SPEAKER said, the Questions of both hon. Members were without Notice, and were certainly of a very argumentative character. He understood the Notices were given only a few minutes ago.

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I can only refer my hon. Friend to the answer on this subject which I gave on Tuesday. It is possible that a large majority of the Representatives of the Metropolis are in favour of the Bill, and an opportunity will be accorded to these Gentlemen of explaining their views. At present the Government must adhere to the position they have taken up.

EGYPT—THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the Papers relating to the Judge Advocate General's recent visit to Egypt on behalf of the ex-Khedive Ismail could be seen?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.), in reply, said, he was sorry the Papers had not been distributed before. They would be in the hands of Members to-day or to-morrow.

MR. DILLON asked, whether the Papers could not be seen before the debate this evening?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said, that the publication of the Papers depended on circumstances which could not be helped. There had been no undue delay; but there were difficulties with the printers in bringing forward all the Papers which were desired at the same time.

MR. DILLON asked, whether the Papers could not be seen in manuscript in the Library?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said, that he would send to the Foreign Office for as many proof copies as could be furnished; so that they should be in the hands of Members before the debate this evening. The Papers were simple and short, and contained all necessary information.

LOTTERIES ACTS—THE LOTTERY AT SWORDS, COUNTY DUBLIN.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) asked the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland a Question of which he had given him private Notice, and it was with reference to a Question that had been already put to him in the House—Whether it had been the practice of successive Governments, both Conservative and Liberal, to decline, when attention had been directed to the matter in the House of Commons, to enforce the law relating to lotteries in cases in which the objects of the promoters of the lotteries had been of a charitable nature; whether the object of the bazaar and drawing of prizes which were to take place at Swords, County of Dublin, on Sunday next, were of a charitable nature; and, if so, whether the usual course would be pursued in reference thereto?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The object of the bazaar and drawing of prizes referred to is, as stated in the Question, of a charitable nature. The attention of the Government having been called to the matter as an alleged breach of the law, they are—as I have already stated to another hon. Member — being advised as to what steps, if any, ought to be taken. In dealing with the matter the Government will have regard to the course which has been usually followed in similar cases.

MR. CLANCY said, that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had failed to answer the first part of the Question —whether it had been the practice of both the Conservative and Liberal Governments to decline to enforce the law in these cases?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: I can hardly answer as to what has been the usual practice of previous Governments. I have already stated that the Government are inquiring and are being advised as to what has been hitherto done in reference to these matters, and they will be glad to act in accordance with the previous practice.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Will the right hon. and gallant Gentleman say why this law should be enforced in England and not in Ireland?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: No, Sir; I cannot.

PRIVILEGE.

PRIVILEGE—CANVASSING MEMBERS.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I desire, Mr. Speaker, to ask you a Question, not so much on a point of Privilege, or of Order, or of Practice, but with reference to what may be called a Breach of the Usages of the House. This morning I received —and I have no doubt other hon. Members also received—a Circular from the hon. and gallant Member for Woolwich (Colonel Hughes), asking me to vote for some Notice of Motion which is to be brought forward on Tuesday night. The hon. and gallant Member for Woolwich says in the Circular that his Conservative Friends will undoubtedly go to a Division, and vote against the Government; and he asks for our votes. But what I want to call attention to is the fact that enclosed in the document was a post-card, and on the back of it was a letter printed—

> "Dear Sir,—I shall vote for (or against) inquiry into the alleged grievances of certain workmen at Enfield and Woolwich Arsenal."

Now, Sir, I wish to ask whether this is a practice in accordance with the Usages of the House of Commons? Is it right for one Member to send this kind of notice to another? If the practice is once allowed to begin, it will, I think, lead to very unfortunate results; and it is on that ground, Sir, that I ask your opinion upon it.

COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich): May I be allowed to explain that I caught the idea of sending out a postcard for reply from the right hon. Gentleman's Colleague at Wolverhampton? I received a letter signed "W. Plowden"—and I presume that the hon. Member for Wolverhampton (Sir William Plowden) was meant—inclosing postcard for my reply. It appeared to me, therefore, to be a course which would also enable me to obtain information which otherwise I could not get. I think that all who know me will feel satisfied that I would not willingly infringe any Rule, nor wilfully disobey any Order, which you, Sir, may think right to be observed.

MR. SPEAKER: In reply to the right hon. Gentleman, I have to state that a few minutes ago he showed me the Circular and the post-card to which he has referred; and I must say that, taking together the Circular and the postcard, the proceeding appears to me to be contrary to the best Usages and traditions of this House; and if the practice were to become prevalent, I am afraid it would tend to lower the character of this House.

MOTION.

——o——

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION (FOREIGNERS).

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Select Committee on Emigration and Immigration (Foreigners) do consist of Seventeen Members."—(*Captain Colomb.*)

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck) said, he thought there ought to be a Representative of the working men on the Committee.

MR. SPEAKER asked the hon. and gallant Member who brought forward the Motion whether he had any observation to make?

CAPTAIN COLOMB said, he thought the suggestion of the hon. Member was a very good one; but the matter did not rest with him.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, in the circumstances, it might be desirable to postpone the nomination of the Committee till next Tuesday.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

——o——

WAYS AND MEANS.—COMMITTEE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

(1.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the years ending on the 31st day of March 1887 and 1888, the sum of £114,900 7*s.* 4*d.* be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) wished to ask the Chairman if he should be in Order upon this Vote in directing attention to certain illegality? He was not certain whether the payments to which he referred were made out of this Vote or not.

THE CHAIRMAN said that this was an excess Vote, and any question the hon. Member desired to raise would be better raised on a subsequent Vote.

MR. DILLON: This is the excess Vote for 1887?

THE CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Vote *agreed to.*

(2.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the year ending on the 31st day of March 1889, the sum of £11,704,603 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

MR. DILLON said, he believed that the point he was desirous of raising would come under this Vote. On Friday night he had directed attention to a matter which certainly appeared to him to be most unfairly brought forward in a Vote on Account. He had always understood that in discussing any Vote on Account it was desirable not to go into any lengthened details, but only to direct attention to matters of general importance. What he wanted to direct attention to was that for the last three years payments had been made, as far as he understood, from the Report of the Committee on Public Accounts, by the Treasury, which the Controller and Auditor General had year after year stated to be illegal, and which the Public Accounts Committee had reported and protested against time after time. The Committee had also reported that the Government were bound to obtain legislative sanction for these payments; but the Treasury had never done so from that day to this. He thought it was a matter which ought to be dealt with immediately, and the Government ought to be called upon to show urgent public necessity for making these illegal payments. If hon. Members would turn to the Report of the Committee on Public Accounts they would find that the officers of the Treasury had been subjected to considerable examination on this matter, and had been asked why they had not obtained legislative sanction for the payments that were made. The answer given by the officers of the Government was that a Bill had been drafted. One officer was asked if the Bill so drafted was sufficient to discharge the Government of their duty, and the answer was "Certainly not." He was then asked why proper efforts were not made to obtain proper legislation on the subject, and the answer was that the pressure of Public Business was very great. Now, no matter what the pressure of Public Business might be, he (Mr. Dillon) thought the first duty of the Government was to obey the law, particularly when it was a question of paying money. He had no reason to suppose that there was any stronger intention on the part of the Government to obey the law this year than in previous years, nor that they were not prepared to set at defiance the views of the Committee on Public Accounts and the Controller and Auditor General. These payments had been made for a purpose, which might account for the reluctance of the Government to ask for legislative sanction for their Acts. They had been used to reward officials in Ireland for certain conduct, and they were extremely unwilling to bring a Bill into that House asking Parliament to sanction their proceedings. Now, he maintained that if it was right and desirable to obtain legislative sanction for any departure from the law, it was ten times more desirable that it should be obtained for the payment of Executive officers who were employed in a time of emergency. What were the payments which in this instance had been illegally made? Recently in Ireland a fresh rank of promotion was established for certain magistrates. Hon. Members would be aware that very strong objections were entertained in that House, and had been expressed over and over again to the fact that the Irish Magistrates held their position at the discretion of the Government, and could be dismissed without cause being shown. At the same time they could also be promoted if they evinced any leaning towards the proceedings of the Executive Government. Not content with that state of things, the Government had created, without the sanction of Parliament, a totally new class of magistrates called "Divisional Magistrates," a very ill-judged step which no Government ought to have taken without the sanction of Parliament. Certain men who had made themselves obnoxious to the people of Ireland had been rewarded by the Government with important and lucrative positions as Divisional Magistrates with large salaries, such salaries not having received the sanction of Parliament in any shape whatever. He maintained that that was a serious matter, and as it had been going on for more than a year the Government ought to say upon what grounds of public necessity these appointments were justifiable. Men like Mr. Byrne, whose salary had been objected to over and over again by the Controller and Auditor General, had been rewarded because they had made themselves obnoxious to the Irish people. Then, again, men like Colonel Turner, whose appointment was altogether illegal, had been paid considerable salaries year after year. Time after time they had been disallowed by the Controller and Auditor General, but they continued to be paid salaries for assisting the Executive in connection with the special mission of General Buller. Although that mission had come to an end these officers continued to draw their salaries, and in Ireland the payment of them was looked upon as a system of bribery. He objected to the Vote, because he thought it was one which ought to receive legislative sanction before the payments were made. The question was raised last year. He had no intention of obstructing the Vote on that occasion, or of opposing the wishes of the First Lord of the Treasury. He might probably have spoken for 10 minutes, and he regretted that the right hon. Gentleman had not extended to him the courtesy he would undoubtedly have extended to any hon. Member sitting on his own side of the House. If that course had been taken the right hon. Gentleman would have got his three Votes last night. What he objected to was not that the right hon. Gentleman should have moved the Closure, but that he should have moved it at a time when no public advantage could be gained, and when the matter bore the appearance of an insult to that House.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.) said, that he was sorry the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) had, in the absence of his right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury, repeated his charge of want of courtesy against the right hon. Gentleman. If there was any man in that House who was not open to such a charge it was his right hon. Friend the Leader of the House. Had his right hon. Friend had any ground for believing that the whole of the Public Business for the evening could have been got through without his moving the Closure, his right hon. Friend was the last person who would have made a Motion of the kind, which was, and always must be, a most repulsive course for a Minister of the Crown to take.

MR. DILLON: Then why did he take it?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said, that the Closure had been moved in order to facilitate the progress of Public Business. His right hon. Friend had expected that the ordinary courtesy of debate would have been pursued, and that no objection would have been raised to the taking of the Votes. He would now pass from that point which, after all, was a comparatively small one, to the other more important subject which the hon. Gentleman had thought fit to raise on a Vote in Committee of Ways and Means—namely, the payment of the salaries of the Irish Divisional Magistrates. He did not deny that the question raised by the hon. Gentleman was a proper one to bring before Parliament, but the hon. Member was not quite correct in his statement of facts. The exact state of things in reference to these magistrates was this—Lord Spencer first initiated the appointment of Divisional Magistrates. The present Government followed the example of their Predecessors, and had acted in the same manner. It was perfectly true, as had been stated by the hon. Member, that the Committee on Public Accounts and the Auditor General and the Treasury had year by year raised objections to this method of paying Divisional Magistrates without having first obtained statutory authority to sanction such payments. He was perfectly ready on the part of the Government to admit that the proceedings which had gone on year after year had been irregular and inconvenient, but they had not been so irregular as the hon. Member seemed to suppose. The question of the payment of these Divisional Magistrates was placed before the Law Officers of the Crown, both by the late and the present Government.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): In what year?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: In 1886, I think.

MR. T. M. HEALY: The question was first raised, I believe, in 1884.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said, all he had to state was that the illegality of the proceedings had been brought before the Law Officers of the Crown, and they had given their opinion in favour of the legality of the payments. Any hon. Member who looked back upon last Session, or any Session since 1884, would see how impossible it would have been for the Government to have wasted the time of the House by bringing forward a Bill to sanction payments which, although irregular and inconvenient, were not illegal. He would ask if it was possible last Session to introduce a Bill of that kind in addition to the legislation which the Government had in hand? Any man who would cast his eyes over the history of last Session must feel that any Minister of the Crown who had had the audacity to come down to the House and bring forward a Bill of a controversial character, simply to set right a matter of convenience would have been laughed at. He was willing to admit, however, that what was not possible last Session might be possible now; and a Bill in connection with the subject was ready, and he was extremely anxious to bring it before the House. He trusted that it might be introduced soon. They could do no more than that. He was sorry that the hon. Gentleman should, in accordance with his usual practice, have attributed motives to his political opponents. The hon. Member said that the reason why the Government had been prevented from introducing a measure last year was that they were afraid of the discussion which the introduction of such a measure would give rise to. Now, they were not afraid of discussion; but what they were afraid of was the time which might be wasted in discussion. It was their desire that the matter should be discussed in the light of day from a fair point of view; but to ask the Government to give up a number of days in order to render these payments not legal, but regular, was to place too great a tax upon them. It was necessary that the Public Business must have made satisfactory progress before such a measure could be proceeded with. He hoped that this explanation would be satisfactory. The Government admitted that there had been an irregularity, but he must repeat that what had been done was not illegal.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby) said, he only wished to say one word in the interests of Public Business. He regretted the Government should have so ordered the Business of the House as to permit this discussion in Committee of Ways and Means to intervene between the House and the very interesting question that hon. Members were expecting to have before them that afternoon. He had no wish to enter into any matters which occurred last night in a controversial spirit, but he must say this in regard to what had fallen from the hon. Member for East Mayo and the Chief Secretary. The Chief Secretary said that if the Government had known that there would be no opposition to the Votes they sought to obtain in Supply and in Committee of Ways and Means, and the excess Vote, they would not have moved the Closure. The right hon. Gentleman added that hon. Members below the Gangway should have communicated to the Government that they did not intend to obstruct the Vote. But it was for the Government to have made inquiries upon this subject before they moved the Closure. How could hon. Members below the Gangway know that it was within the breast of the Government to move the Closure or not?

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I have allowed the hon. Member for East Mayo to go into what occurred to Supply last night as being a personal matter, and I have also allowed the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to reply to him; but that question has nothing to do with this Vote, and I cannot allow the discussion to continue.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University) said, that as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, he wished to allude to the question which had been raised by the hon. Member for East Mayo, because he was not altogether satisfied with the remarks which had fallen from the Chief Secretary for Ireland. The attention of the Public Accounts Committee had been drawn to the fact that payments in excess of those authorized by the Legislature had been made by the Treasury. He would not follow the right hon. Gentleman, who seemed to draw a distinction between what was illegal and what was irregular. These payments, at any rate, were irregular, and were rightly questioned by the Auditor General. The Public Accounts Committee, although they thought that under the circumstances they were justified in not disallowing the payment, recommended that a Bill should be introduced to settle the question. He understood the Chief Secretary, however, to speak very doubtfully with reference to such a Bill. But it was most objectionable that year after year the Controller and Auditor General and the Public Accounts Committee should report to the House that certain payments were irregular. The Committee would, he felt sure, see that the continuance of such practice must weaken the position of the Auditor and Controller General and detract from the effective assistance which the Committee on Public Accounts could give to Parliament. He had hoped to hear from the Government that it was their distinct intention to bring in a Bill dealing with the question this Session, and he was disappointed to find that the Chief Secretary added the qualification that the Government would do so if they could find time. He had only risen to express his hope, and he believed he might speak also for his Colleagues on the Public Accounts Committee, that

Her Majesty's Government would make time to deal with the question this Session.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, the hon. Gentleman had somewhat misinterpreted what he had said. He certainly merely meant to express the intention of the Government to deal with the question as soon as they could.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne) said, he certainly shared the impression of the hon. Baronet that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary had spoken with considerable doubt. He thought the right hon. Gentleman said he was doubtful whether there would be sufficient time to allow the Government to proceed with the Bill. He was the more surprised at the right hon. Gentleman taking that tone when he remembered the power of Closure, which the Government possessed, and with the aid of which they could press this much needed Bill through the House. No doubt the right hon. Gentleman was correct as to the opinion of the Law Officers in 1886 being in favour of the legality of the payments. It was, however, felt at that time that it was the most irregular course to continue them without legislative sanction of an Act of Parliament.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) said, there was a suggestion he would make to the Government—namely, that they should withdraw the Bill for the payment of a Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland, and substitute for it a Bill to legalize these payments. He thought the adoption of some such course would very much facilitate matters. The Bill the Government proposed to introduce was a measure which had been urgent for several years past, whereas the Bill for the payment of a Parliamentary Under Secretary had only become urgent during the last six months, and could afford to wait for another year. These payments had been irregularly made for some years, and there had been a public scandal in reference to them which ought to be remedied at once.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said, that at the time the question was first raised the Chairman of Committees was Secretary to the Treasury, and he would remember the debate which occurred upon it and which kept the House sitting all night long. He would remind the hon. Gentleman that the argument he had used then was similar to that which was used by the Chief Secretary now—namely, that this was not an illegal charge, because it had been incorporated in an Act which afterwards became an Act of Parliament, and which, of course, legalized all the payments included in it. That argument was at once met by his hon. Friend the then Member for Queenstown (Mr. Arthur O'Connor), who pointed out that the Act of Victoria fixed the salaries of the magistrates in Ireland at a limited sum and that no subsequent general appropriation of money could legalize the payments. On that occasion the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow (Sir George Trevelyan) who was then Chief Secretary, made a promise very similar to that which had now been given by the present Secretary. The right hon. Gentleman distinctly promised four years ago that a measure should be introduced to legalize these payments. It was only another instance of the value that was to be attached to Ministerial promises. Four years had elapsed and no effect whatever had been given to the promise then made. In the debate which occurred four years ago the Chief Secretary gave an intimation that a Bill would be introduced, and that intimation had again been given by the Government. If, however, the Government intended to introduce a Bill on the subject, it was necessary that the Committee should have a distinct pledge as to its nature and scope. It should be a Bill with one distinct object, and one object alone—namely, to legalize these payments. The objection raised to the Bill of 1884 was, that having committed an illegality the Government brought in an omnibus Bill in which they included a great many other matters. He therefore asked the Government to say that they would confine any measure they intended to introduce to the defects which had been pointed out by the Public Accounts Committee and avoid everything else. That was a fair proposition, and if they would introduce a Bill simply to legalize the payments he should be glad to see it introduced. He would not say what reception he should give it, but certainly if he found that it was a general Bill dealing with a great variety of subjects, he should offer it the strongest opposition.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) said, he thought that the First Lord of the Treasury should give some assurance in regard to the point which had been raised by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of London (Sir John Lubbock). The Treasury, the Controller, and Auditor General, and also the Committee on Public Accounts, have reported in condemnation of the manner in which these payments have been made, and it was the duty of the Committee not to allow the matter to be treated by the Government with contempt.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster) said, he understood that his hon. Friend had already engaged on the part of the Government to bring in a Bill in order to meet the objections of the Controller and Auditor General, and to legalize the payments objected to. He thought this was a sufficient assurance.

Mr. BRADLAUGH said, there had been no misunderstanding about the remarks of the Chief Secretary, which was only a vague statement, that the Government might bring in a Bill if they had time. It certainly was not a positive pledge.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, that time was of importance to secure the progress of Public Business, and, therefore, he had attached to the promise a proviso in reference to time.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) said, he wished to draw the attention of the First Lord of the Treasury to the evidence given to the Public Accounts Committee last year by an official representing the Treasury, wherein it was stated that if the Vote was not legalized it would not be presented to Parliament. Notwithstanding that declaration, the Vote was now before the Committee, and the official of the Treasury said he was afraid the matter was one over which the Government had no control.

Mr. DILLON said, he would submit to the good sense of the Government if they were desirous of acting fairly in the matter, that the Bill for the payment of the salary of the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland should be given up. Did they intend to press it, no matter what the time was at their disposal. He was afraid it would be seen that they would force that measure through, and if so why not this measure to legalize payments, which they themselves declared to be illegal, so as to bring their acts in accordance with the law? Would the Chief Secretary get up in his place, and say that if he was pressed for time, he would withdraw the Bill for the salary of the Parliamentary Under Secretary?

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby) said, the question was one upon which the Committee ought to have an answer from the Government. The Bill they were asked to introduce was a Bill to regulate or justify payments that were clearly irregular or illegal.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Not illegal.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT said, the Government admitted that they were illegal, because they were of opinion that they ought to be legalized. They knew that the payments had been condemned by the Financial Secretary and the Public Accounts Committee, and the promised Bill, therefore, was of far more pressing importance than the Bill for the salary of the Parliamentary Under Secretary. What was asked of the Government was whether they would give precedence to a Bill for legalizing these payments—for the Bill which appeared on the Paper night after night—for the salary of the Under Secretary. That was a very fair demand to make of the Government. There could be no question whatever from a financial point of view that the Bill they were now discussing was a far more important and urgent measure than the Bill for the salary of the Parliamentary Under Secretary. He would, therefore, ask the Government to give an undertaking that the Bill to regulate the provision for Divisional Magistrates in Ireland should have precedence.

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, that the Government had already stated that they would introduce the Bill to which the right hon. Gentleman attached importance, and would use their best efforts to pass the measure into law with as little delay as possible. He could not undertake, however, to accept from the right hon. Gentleman suggestions as to the order and manner in which Public Business should be conducted.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) said, the Vote was for £10,000,000 of money, and as the sum of about

£1,000 was involved in this question, he would move to reduce the Vote to £9,999,000. The course pursued by the Government had been condemned year after year, both by the Controller and Auditor General and the Public Accounts Committee, and now that a distinct pledge was asked by the right hon. Member for Derby from the Government as to whether they regarded the representations of the Public Accounts Committee as of such importance that they would be prepared to give this Bill precedence, the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Government said "No," but he would push on the other measure. He (Mr. T. M. Healy) protested against the action of the Government. He would take a Division in order to see whether English Members would vote for continued illegality. For four years the Public Accounts Committee had condemned these illegal payments, and last year a distinct pledge was given that the payment should not be made again until its legality was fixed by Statute. He begged to move that the Vote of £10,000,000 be reduced to £9,999,000.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. and learned Member has not stated the sum accurately, it is not £10,000,000 but £11,704,603.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a reduced sum of £11,703,603, be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK said, that the Motion moved by the hon. and learned Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy, scarcely affected the question. The Committee on Public Accounts did not disallow the Vote last year, but passed it with a strong expression of opinion that it was incumbent on Her Majesty's Government to legalize the payments by passing an Act this year. He had risen a short time ago, because he understood his right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to express himself in doubtful language; but since then his right hon. Friend had given an explanation, and they now had the assurance of the Leader of the House that the Government intended to bring in a Bill to legalize these payments. Under the circumstances, he thought they might trust the matter in the hands of the Government, and he, therefore, hoped the hon. and learned Member would not press his Amendment to a Division.

Mr. BRADLAUGH said, he would venture to join in the appeal which had been made to the hon. and learned Member not to press for a reduction of the Vote. He would point out that the whole of this discussion had arisen from the language which was understood to have fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary. There appeared to have been a misunderstanding; but the language of the right hon. Gentleman was somewhat loose, and implied that if there was any question in regard to time the measure, when introduced, would be thrown over.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said that after what had been stated by the hon. Baronet the Member for the University of London, he should allow the Amendment to be negatived without a Division. He thought, however, that he was entitled to ask when the promised Bill would be brought in, and if it would be confined to the simple point of legalizing these payments?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he could not pledge himself on that matter.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR wished to say one word as to the course pursued by the Public Accounts Committee in not having taken action to give effect to their opinions. They had asked if it was intended on behalf of the Government to continue making these payments, which were admittedly irregular, if not actually illegal; and when the Treasury official was further asked what the Treasury would do if the Public Accounts Committee disallowed the payments in regard to an Under Secretary, the answer made was that the Treasury would go on making them just the same. Under these circumstances, the Public Accounts Committee did not disallow them; but, in his opinion, the Treasury ought to be bound by the engagement they had made with the Public Accounts Committee last year, and they ought not to submit the Vote again until they had legalized it by passing an Act of Parliament.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Original Question put.

Resolved, That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the year ending on the 31st day of March

1889, the sum of £11,704,603 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

Resolutions to be reported upon *Monday* next.

Committee to sit again upon *Monday* next.

NATIONAL DEBT (CONVERSION) BILL.—[BILL 164.]

(*Mr. Courtney, Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Jackson.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

SIR CHARLES LEWIS (Antrim, N.), who had given Notice of the following Amendment:—

> "That, having regard to great loss and injury sustained by the very large number of persons who hold small amounts of Stock, the interest on which is proposed to be reduced, and to the small annual reduction in the public burdens effected by the proposed conversion, this House thinks it inexpedient to make the change proposed,"

said, his object in intervening at this stage of the Bill was to insure that the position of the smaller and poorer holders of Government securities should be considered by the House, and should be fairly treated. Although he had some particular points to mention, he might say at once that he had no general hostility to the Bill. He thought that nothing could be so unfortunate as to dispose of the Bill without due consideration being given to the interests of the class of holders just mentioned. From the large number of communications which he had received he found that a very strong, not to say bitter, feeling prevailed on that subject; and he thought that the circumstances in which it was proposed to carry out the measure of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) ought in every respect to be fair, honourable, and considerate. That Bill would effect by far the largest conversion of Stock and lowering of interest that had ever taken place in this Kingdom, and he did not think that the interval of only a week allowed between the introduction of the measure and the second reading was sufficient for the purpose. He was aware that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had quoted as a precedent the course pursued in 1844, when about the same amount of time was allowed; but the circumstances connected with the earlier measure were entirely different from the present scheme. The amount of Stock then converted was not half as much as was now proposed by the right hon. Gentleman to be dealt with. Now, he (Sir Charles Lewis) would ask the House whether there was not in recent times a general belief that the Three per Cent Stock bore a fixed and unalterable rate of interest? That impression had been confirmed by the term "annuities" which was applied to them. In answer to a Question yesterday as to the number of small holders in the different Three per Cent Stocks, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer told the House that there were no fewer than 104,500 separate accounts not exceeding £1,000 in amount; that there were 13,000 other accounts between £1,000 and £2,000; and 10,500 accounts between £2,000 and £3,000. The maximum point of those small holdings only produced an annual income of £90. Nobody could be said to be passing rich with that amount; and it might be taken generally that those small holders belonged to the class where poverty was most distressingly felt—namely, those who were usually included in the lower middle ranks of life. Again, in addition to those persons who were direct holders of Stock, there were other classes who were also interested in small amounts of Consols. In one case, for example, which had been brought to his notice, a trustee of an estate in Consols stated that he had to divide the annual income among 15 different persons, the largest sum paid to any one of them being £56, and the smallest about £35. In fact, the sums held by trustees included the interests of a very large number of small holders. The investments also by the Court of Chancery were split up among a large number of persons, and represented a very great number of small interests. What effect would the Bill have upon this small class of holders? A person having £1,000 in Consols and receiving £30 a-year was asked to submit to a deduction of £2 10*s*. In the case of a person who lived upon a miserable income of £30, that reduction represented increased distress; and if they went up the scale to cases, say, of persons who were in the habit of receiving £90 a-year from their investments in Consols, the reduction in each case would be £7 10*s.* Thus the large class of persons who suffered from that direst of all distress, genteel poverty, would be ruthlessly deprived of an essential part of their daily income—he might almost say their daily bread. There were hundreds of these persons who had not yet appreciated what the consequences of the measure would be. He had received numerous letters upon the subject from various classes of holders. A poor old lady wrote that it was dire cruelty to reduce the rate of interest received by thousands of people who had nothing more to maintain them in their old age. It mattered little, she said, to those who had some hundreds of pounds a-year; but to those who, like herself, had only £1,000 invested, it was a serious matter. A clergyman writing from Yorkshire said that he was trustee for several small charities. In the case of one charity some old people received a weekly pittance of 5*s.* each, and the Bill would reduce this to 4*s.* 7*d.* or 4*s.* 2*d.*, which meant that the old men would be deprived of their pipes and the old women of their sugar. He had received another letter from a gentleman who, in his official capacity, had to pay £1 3*s.* 4*d.* per week to a family, the father and mother being too old to work. To reduce this, as the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to do, meant, the letter said, starvation in the house of a worthy but helpless couple. If people who had made investments in Consols had had fair play, if more time had been given for the consideration of the matter, hon. Members would have heard such expressions of opinion from their constituents as would have induced them to regard the Bill in a very serious light. What was the reason for the desperate hurry of the Government? The Bill would not come into operation until 1889; therefore the Government could reasonably have given more time for the consideration of the measure. In the case of poor people the Bill would be oppressive. With regard to that large class of persons who, as trustees, had invested money in Consols, and had no power to change the investment, the Bill provided for application to the Court of Chancery. The only remedy, therefore, which this class of holders had in the difficulty thus presented was an application to the Court of Chancery, at the expense of the estate. He thought that a better provision than this, by which such cases might be cheaply and expeditiously disposed of, should be made. Then, again, it would be impossible to get the consent in the Court of Chancery before the 12th of April of the vast number of persons whose money was in trust, so that, in point of fact, the provisions of the Bill would actually deprive those people who needed the bonus of the opportunity of getting it. The hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. J. M. Maclean) yesterday asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, under the Bill, provision would be made to protect trustees who had invested moneys in Consols to cover annuities under wills, or similarly to provide for ground-rents or rent-charges under wills where a distribution of the rest of the property had been legally made. The right hon. Gentleman replied that this was provided for by the Bill, and referred the hon. Member to Clause 19. In this answer the right hon. Gentleman had, in his opinion, carried the interpretation of the clause far beyond what it would really bear. It appeared to him that the proposal introduced a viciousness which required very serious attention. The conversion was not proposed on its own merits; but an inducement had been held out to bankers and brokers to employ their influence to induce persons to come in. It was no small matter, for he begged to remind the House that they were dealing with £580,000,000 of Stock. He was told by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that £68,000,000 of that amount was held by Government Departments; but the right hon. Gentleman would not say that all the holders had the power to make the conversion. That left £512,000,000. They were told that the scheme was already a great success, and that the bankers and brokers, especially in London, were loud in their declaration and promises of support. If so, the scheme was already virtually carried. Out of the £512,000,000 he (Sir Charles Lewis) estimated that the Government would have to pay brokerage upon £400,000,000.

Mr. GOSCHEN: The hon. Baronet is wrong in his figures. No commission is paid upon the £150,000,000 of the New Threes, the reduction of which is automatic.

Sir CHARLES LEWIS said, he would take it, then, that £250,000,000 would be dealt with, and that would amount for brokerage to about £175,000. That was a pretty big sum to pay for the launching of this scheme. It was worth a good deal of money to the bankers and brokers, and when they were told that the scheme had received the support of these two classes he put it to the House whether the £175,000 had not something to do with the proposal? They were not a large class, and £200 or £300 each, with the agency commission, had considerable influence in the formation of opinion. When the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) proposed his plan of conversion, he offered no such fee, and, though the terms of conversion were far better than those under this Bill, the brokers put their backs up and left the scheme rigidly alone; but now the assent of the great financial houses was bought with the conversion fee. There was another feature about the present scheme which was not very nice. Primarily speaking, what ought the public to do as the debtor of the stockholders? What it ought to do was to say—"We are getting tired of paying you 3 per cent; we will not pay any more than $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent; we will pay you off." But they did not do that. Assent was assumed; in that case dissent was not mentioned. That was not a fair way of dealing with the creditors of the State, who could not call upon the State to pay more, and were at the mercy of the State. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, however, would not take the responsibility of saying honestly—"We will pay you off." He said—"We are equal to the occasion." How? By the sinister provision in Clause 1, second paragraph, which declared that all holders of New Three per Cent Stock who signify their dissent—"Shall be paid off in such order and at such time and in such manner as Parliament may direct." Thus it was proposed to keep the sword hanging over the unfortunate stockholders. Mr. Goulburn did not go out of his way to offer the inducement of a commission; he allowed his scheme to float upon its own merits.

Mr. GOSCHEN said, he was sorry to interrupt the hon. Baronet, but the 5*s.* would not apply to the New Threes. He had strictly followed the precedent of Mr. Goulburn, and the New Threes represented a smaller sum than that which was converted by Mr. Goulburn.

Sir CHARLES LEWIS said, that the way in which the scheme affected the smaller class of fundholders was very remarkable. These people were not subject to Income Tax, but any relief which the scheme might afford to the taxpayers would be confined entirely to the Income Tax payers. Nobody pretended that the expected saving of £1,400,000, which was about equal to $\frac{3}{4}$*d.* in the pound of Income Tax, was to be applied in altering any other tax. The effect of it would be, therefore, to lighten the burden of the Income Tax payers. In other words, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was proposing to take $\frac{3}{4}$*d.* in the pound of the burden off the Income Tax payer, and to levy 20 pence in the pound upon the unfortunate small holders who did not pay Income Tax at the present time. Mr. Goulburn did no such thing as that. They were told to feel great delight at the improved credit of the country. It was said we could borrow now at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, whereas formerly we could only borrow at 3 per cent. He did not say that the public credit had not something to do with it, but it had very little. Had the decrease of foreign loans nothing to do with it? Had the depreciation of landed securities nothing to do with it? Why, if they looked through the returns of the large Insurance Companies, who had millions to invest, they would find that their great resort was to go into land. Would they go into land now? He was sorry to see these Communistic views cropping up on that side of the House as well as on the other. Whereas there used to be millions invested by the Insurance Companies in land, they now fought shy of it. Had that not something to do with the increase in the price of Consols? Had the badness of trade—the vast amount of money withdrawn from trade and commerce—nothing to do with investing in Consols and running the price up to what they had recently seen it? In 1844, when the capital of the country was much less, they had £100,000,000 more of public debt, because from that time to this the decrease in the National Debt exceeded £100,000,000. He ventured to think that the reasons he had given were sufficient to account for the cup running over so brilliantly. He was rather amused to hear one sentence of the right hon. Gentleman. He said in his enthusiasm that he wanted to see this new Stock become the champion Stock of the future. He would like to see the champion Stock giving fair play, full consideration to a vast number of poor people who would be so seriously injured by this scheme. He had not wished to say it himself, but he had seen that it had been remarked, that there was a slight flavour of the Plan of Campaign about the scheme—only a slight one, but one he would have been glad to see absent. In this very serious matter, the conversion of nearly £600,000,000 of Stock, they ought to have had not only more time, but more equitable provisions. He was told the measure was a great success. The last fact he saw showing that it was a great success was that the provincial bankers had asked for more plunder out of it. They said 1*s.* 6*d.* was not enough for them and they wanted an increase. But he had no doubt it would be thrust through. He hoped they would not see what was witnessed after the conversion of 1844, a great rush of public investments and public Companies. It was after that they had the railway mania, from which some of them were still smarting. He asked the House to consider the case of the poor people who could not help themselves, many of them women who had little influence; and before sitting down he would read an extract of a letter from a clergyman. He wrote—

> "His benefice was at one time worth £265; now, through agricultural depression, it only brought in £82. He had investments in Consols or he should not be able to live at all, and his income was so small that a reduction of £10 or £15 per annum"—

it might be supposed that he had £3,500 in Consols—

> "would materially affect his financial position."

The loss, he said, would be nothing to an opulent man like the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but it was almost ruin to

him. The next paragraph in the letter he should like to read *sotto voce* to his hon. Friends near him, but that was impossible. The rev. gentleman said—

> "That at the last General Election he advised his parishioners to vote for the Conservative Party, because they were not likely to interfere with the rights of property."

"That argument," wrote this clergyman, "I can no longer adduce;" and he concluded by saying "that confidence in their leaders had been utterly extinguished." [*Laughter.*] He heard some hon. Friends laugh. If they would wait a month he thought they would find there was more in it than they supposed. They could not remove the impression by simply pooh-poohing it. He thought the case required serious consideration, and he begged to move the Amendment which stood in his name.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "having regard to great loss and injury sustained by the very large number of persons who hold small amounts of stock, the interest on which is proposed to be reduced, and to the small annual reduction in the public burdens effected by the proposed conversion, this House thinks it inexpedient to make the change proposed."—(*Sir Charles Lewis.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) said, he agreed with the hon. Baronet (Sir Charles Lewis) that the question was one which deserved the serious consideration of the House, but the test which they must apply to the proposals before them was, whether the Government, having regard to the present state of the money market and the credit of the Government, was in a position to go into the money market and operate a given sum of money at a rate of interest paying $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent for 15 years, and then $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent for 20 years longer—practically meaning £2 12s. per cent for a period of 35 years. Although they might feel the sincerest sympathy with some of the cases to which the hon. Baronet had alluded, still it must be admitted that no large scheme of this kind could be carried out without inflicting a considerable amount of suffering on large classes of individuals, yet as trustees of the public purse and representing the public debtor and the House of Commons, the Government would not be justified in paying one shilling more than the market value on account of the National Debt. In discharging his duty, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had simply to make a perfectly fair and equal bargain between debtor and creditor. He took it that that was the first sound principle to apply to this Bill. The market must not be in any way prejudiced by the resources which the Government of the day might possess, and there should not be the shadow of a shade of suspicion of a stock-jobbing transaction. Justice ought to be done to both sides. The precedent of 1844 was not applicable to this case, and could not be a guide to the right hon. Gentleman with reference to the course which he now proposed to take. Mr. Goulburn's proceedings were taken on firm ground, which the present Chancellor of the Exchequer did not stand upon. Mr. Goulburn proposed to reduce Three-and-a-Half per Cents to Three-and-a-Quarter for a period of 10 years, and then to Three per Cents; but he had behind him £500,000,000 of Three per Cent Stock. With that large body of a lower Stock behind him, the operation was a perfectly safe one. We had no such standard now. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had truly said that it was not fair to quote the present value of the Two-and-Three-Quarter per Cents, because the amount was so small. Nor was there any indication, by means of the figure of its value, to speak as to the value of the new Stock, which a grateful Stock Exchange had denominated "Goschens." But there were two side-lights in the money market with respect to this Bill. He agreed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that there had been a general fall in interest, and that there was an enormous amount of money seeking investment. Every year a large amount of trust and insurance savings had to be invested; and there was a general disinclination on the part of the great insurance and other Companies to invest in mortgages or land. Of that the public ought undoubtedly to reap the benefit. But there was another side-light to which the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not refer on Friday. He quoted many precedents of conversion; the precedent of 1822, the precedent of Lord Althorp in 1834, and that of Mr. Goulburn in 1844. But the right hon. Gentleman did not give the precedent of January, 1888, or inform the House of the terms upon which the latest loan of the English Government was raised. And yet that would have been the safest indication of the present state of the money market. What was the opinion of the Bank of England and the other banking authorities as to the rate of interest at which the Government could borrow? In January, 1888, the Chancellor of the Exchequer issued £37,000,000 of Local Loan Stock at 3 per cent, irredeemable for 25 years. That Stock could not be redeemed until 1913. The first operation under which that Stock was issued was an equivalent exchange of £7,400,000 of other Stocks. He (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) had asked the right hon. Gentleman what was meant by "equivalent," and the reply was—"the same amount, Stock for Stock." In January, 1888, knowing he was about to propose a conversion of existing Stock to Two-and-Three-Quarters and then to Two-and-a-Half, the right hon. Gentleman exchanged this Stock, pound for pound, for Three per Cent Stock, not to be redeemed for 25 years. There was a small sale of £600,000 immediately afterwards by the Government brokers. The people who held that Local Loan Stock were to be congratulated on their good fortune. On January 10 an advertisement was issued inviting tenders for this new stock at a minimum of £101 15*s.* Consols and £101 5*s.* Reduced or New Threes per £100 of the new Stock. On January 18, the tenders were opened. What was the opinion of the City on January 18? On the 18th of January, they offered to the Government for £100 of these Three per Cents, £101 16*s.* 7*d.* Consols, and £101 5*s.* 11*d.* Reduced. The tenders were—Consols, £2,466,000; Reduced, £1,117,000. These were the Stocks on which no conversion could take place without 12 months' notice. But of the New Threes, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer could deal with at any time, the tender was £6,575,000. Therefore, at that date, the New Three per Cent Stock, liable to be reduced to 2¾ and 2½, was exchanged to the extent of £6,500,000 at a premium of 25*s.* The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that no portion of this Stock was taken by a Government Department. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the Bank of England was a Government Department, and would also ask him to deal with the report which was current that the Bank of England was taking £7,000,000 of that Stock out of £18,000,000.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's Hanover Square) said, he would explain that the Bank of England had some of the Stock before. There was no question of taking £7,000,000 out of £10,000,000.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER said, that was not his point, whether the Bank of England was taking £7,000,000 out of £10,000,000; but that the Bank was taking £7,000,000 altogether of this Stock at 25*s.* premium. To get rid of £18,351,000 Three per Cents the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave £18,200,000 Three per Cents, irredeemable for 25 years, thereby only effecting a saving of £4,500 a-year. But what about the other £18,000,000? The right hon. Gentleman had only given the figures of £18,000,000, whereas he counted £37,000,000. He was not going to criticize whether this was a wise or unwise operation. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made no statement to the House, and they were pledged to express confidence in the right hon. Gentleman that the course taken was the best for the country, but, tried by that test two months ago, it was not the opinion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the country could borrow at $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent, or why did he then make a 3 per cent loan irredeemable for 25 years. He must draw a distinction between the compulsory and the optional parts of this Bill. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was dealing compulsorily with only one kind of Stock. The holders of that Stock had no grievance whatever. That was a pure matter of negotiation as between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Money Market. The holders bought the Stock, with the knowledge that after a certain date it might be redeemed at any moment at par. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer had complicated his scheme by the introduction of an optional conversion, as well as a compulsory conversion, and the very fact of its being optional almost implied *a fortiori*, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer could not make it compulsory. Therefore, there must be some terms which the Chancellor of the Exchequer thought would be sufficient to tempt the people into accepting this option. Every man must judge for himself. Even the poor holders must appreciate the possibilities of foreign complications and trade revival, and all the circumstances which might disturb the Money Market in the next 12 months, and they must act accordingly. They were told that this optional part of the scheme met with the cordial approval of the City, and especially of the bankers; and the late Lord Mayor loudly cheered that statement. What he (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) wanted to know was why the bankers of to-day were so strong in the support of an optional system, whereas they were so steadily opposed to the optional system which his right hon. Friend the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) proposed in 1884. A Governor of the Bank of England pronounced an opinion that his right hon. Friend's scheme was detestably bad. The House of Commons had a right to know why it was unsound, unfair, and detestably bad in 1884 to accept the terms of the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and why it was now the height of prudence and financial wisdom to accept a less favourable proposal when it was brought forward by one of his Successors. He would also ask the right hon. Gentleman if there was a precedent in the whole history of the British Treasury for the Treasury paying a commission of the nature of that which was now proposed? He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would answer the question at once.

MR. GOSCHEN: Yes, sir.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: Will the Chancellor of the Exchequer tell us what it is?

MR. GOSCHEN: When I reply.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: I will admit the Suez Canal may be brought in; but there was no precedent in 1844 in the case of Mr. Goulburn.

MR. GOSCHEN: There was no optional conversion.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER said, the right hon. Gentleman seemed to think that that was in his favour; but to his (Mr. Henry H. Fowler's) mind it aggravated the objection. What was proposed amounted to a payment to the agent of a creditor by the debtor to promote the interest of the debtor, and till such debt was legalized by the Bill, he had no doubt that it would be an illegal payment, and was so at that moment. He would undertake that the House of Commons should have the opportunity of pronouncing an opinion upon 1*s.* 6*d.* per cent bribe offered to brokers and bankers. The phrase "recognized agents" was new in English law and Acts of Parliament. Were the bankers and the Bank of England to receive this commission as "recognized agents?" Why were the poor stockholders to be kept out of this commission? The greatest demoralization in our modern commercial system was produced by this giving of commission. If his hon. Friend the Member for Preston (Mr. R. W. Hanbury) had had an opportunity the other night of calling the attention of the House to a case of misconduct at Woolwich, this question would have been raised. How could we prevent people from taking commissions, when we gave commissions to bankers and other recognized agents? As he said, he would undertake that the House of Commons should have an opportunity of expressing a definitive opinion upon this subject. He would now ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what he was going to do with the Sinking Fund? The whole theory of our Sinking Fund was that the money put into Terminable Annuities could be replaced by Consols at par. There were, however, no provisions in the present Bill for dealing with that. Again, there was the whole question of the Savings Bank, upon which he wished for some information. The bulk of the money was held by the Post Office Savings Banks, and we could not continue to pay the interest which we were paying now after an operation of this sort. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had told them nothing about that large item of the National Debt, consisting of upwards of £13,645,000 which was payable to the Bank of England and the Bank of Ireland, and upon which the interest of 3 per cent was payable. Did the right hon. Gentleman propose to interfere with that rate of interest, to reduce it to $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent or continue the present 3 per cent interest? Those were questions which he thought the House ought to consider. The hon. Baronet assumed that the proposed reduction of interest would be a relief to the taxpayer. It would be nothing of the sort, because under Sir Stafford Northcote's Act, a certain fixed sum was appropriated as the charge of the National Debt, and the whole of the £2,800,000 must be borrowed. Hon. Members, therefore, must not suppose that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was going to repeat his operation of last year, and to again interfere with the repayment of the National Debt. His own impression was that the right hon. Gentleman had done well in grappling with the New Three per Cents, and had he confined his proposed operation to them, he would have received the cordial and united support of the whole House. He, however, could not help deploring the right hon. Gentleman's attempt to bring about this optional conversion of Consols and Reduced, not upon its own merits, but by means of a commission to the agents of the holders of those stocks. He doubted whether that attempt would succeed; but whether it succeeded or failed, he thought the mode in which that part of the transaction would have been carried out, would not be one which would reflect much credit upon either the right hon. Gentleman or upon the Government of which he was a Member.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London) said, the House was aware that by the financial economy of the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), and by the Sinking Fund of Sir Stafford Northcote, the public Debt had been diminished. Since the proposals of the right hon. Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), as was well known, the rate of interest on investments had become less and less, until the time had arrived when the Chancellor of the Exchequer might expect to make a more advantageous bargain for the country than could have been made four years ago. That was the reason why the present Chancellor of the Exchequer had been more successful than his Predecessor. He sympathized with the clients of the hon. Baronet the Member for North Antrim (Sir Charles Lewis), the holders of Stock whose income would be reduced owing to the proposed conversion of the National Debt; but, at the same time, he did not think that this was a matter which the Chancellor of the

Exchequer or the House could take into account. It seemed to him that it was the duty of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to make the best bargain he could for the country, and now that he found the interest on the Debt was higher than it ought to be, he was simply doing that which would tend to the discharge of the Debt ultimately, by bringing in a measure which would reduce the rate of interest. Much as they might sympathize with those who were in the position referred to by the hon. Baronet, he said that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was doing no more than was right in looking rather to the position of the taxpayer than to the holders of Public Stock. They had to look not simply to what might be the verdict of the House, because he could not think that the House would reject this measure of his right hon. Friend, but to the verdict of the Money Market; and considering the very high price which the Public Funds had reached, and that all other Stocks stood at a premium, he said they had in those facts the strongest evidence that in the Money Market the proposal of his right hon. Friend had met with approval. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was therefore, in his opinion, not only justified but bound to introduce this Bill. He had simply risen to thank his right hon. Friend for the lucid statement which he made to the House when the Bill was brought in, and to say that the measure would have his cordial support. He had received a letter from a solicitor, one of his constituents, who said that there did not appear to be in the Bill any provision for fixing the amount of new Stock which would be deemed equivalent to the old Consols, and that this was a matter of importance with regard to some mortgages on estates, which provided for the sale of an equivalent amount of Consols. His right hon. Friend would probably refer to that point in his reply, and also say whether some provision could not be made to supersede the necessity of going to the Court in the case of certain small funded amounts held in trust. By way of illustration he might take the case of a fund of say £500, which on the death of a widow had to be divided by the trustees among 20 grandchildren. It was obvious that it would be most expensive to go to the Court in a case of this kind, and he thought the point was one which his right hon. Friend should consider.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University) said, he was sure that all hon. Members would sympathize with those who would suffer owing to the scheme before the House, but at the same time he thought they must agree that it was the duty of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to make the best bargain in his power for the public. Moreover, the change could hardly have been unexpected. For many years, with those who advocated payment of the National Debt, he had urged that in addition to other advantages it would enable the Chancellor of the Exchequer to reduce the rate of interest and thus diminish the burden on the taxpayers. He would not occupy the attention of the House for many moments, but he might perhaps be permitted to thank the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the care with which he had prepared his plans, and also for the lucid and interesting speech in which he had explained them to the House. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) appeared throughout his remarks to be anxious to find as much fault as he could, but he did not think he had succeeded in pointing out any real flaw in the scheme of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman said that the conversion would be of no advantage to the taxpayers, on the extraordinary ground that when the conversion had taken place the saving of interest would probably go in reduction of the amount of the National Debt. But the amount payable for interest would be very much less. Surely the right hon. Gentleman would not deny that it was an advantage to the country that a larger amount should go in reduction of Debt. The right hon. Gentleman also said that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer had only dealt with the New Three per Cents, he would have given him his cordial support, but that he could not help deploring the right hon. Gentleman's attempt to bring about this optional conversion of Consols and Reduced by offering a bribe to the holders of stocks. But it had always been the opinion of most of those engaged in financial operations that there should be one large Stock, and he was sure that he was expressing the general opinion in thanking the Chancellor of the Exchequer for carrying out that arrangement as far as he could. He, also, thought the right hon. Gentleman had used a wise discretion in not increasing the nominal amount of the Debt, but in taking a rate of interest at which he could borrow money at par. The time given for consideration also seemed to him to hit a happy medium, inasmuch as it allowed a fair time for consideration, and yet did not imperil the conversion by unduly postponing the completion. The hon. Member for North Antrim seemed to think the time allowed was too short, but he (Sir John Lubbock) believed that every one interested would receive fair notice of what was to be done. At the same time it had always seemed to him that Mr. Goulburn had adopted a rather arbitrary course in assuming the consent of those who did not dissent. Moreover, in the case of 1844 the time allowed was extremely short. But it was then urged that this was less material than it might seem, because the terms were so good that everyone was sure to accept them. This plan required, in fairness, that the terms offered should clearly be such as it was desirable to adopt. At the same time he was not sure that the precedent was a good one, because it might be adopted by a less scrupulous Government without the other circumstances which constituted its justification. They were all very glad to hear that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was confident in his expectation that, notwithstanding the melancholy event of last week, no foreign complications would endanger the success of his plan. At the same time, he should have been glad if the right hon. Gentleman had left himself some latitude as to the terms until the last moment. The margin was certainly not large, and a fall of even 1 per cent would seriously endanger his scheme. If, however, the right hon. Gentleman did not think this was necessary, it was not for him to press it. It was a curious commentary on the depression of which we had heard so much that the savings of the country should enable us to reduce the interest on the National Debt. It could not be said that this was owing to capital being taken out of business, because the volume of business was as large as ever—it was the profits that were reduced. Nor was it owing to capital being removed from other investments, because in that case other investments would have fallen; and, on the contrary, as the right hon. Gentleman had shown, other investments had also risen. We must then recognize that, though no doubt some classes had suffered greatly, still the national savings, as a whole, had been so large as to raise the prices of all good securities, and thus render possible the reduction of interest. There were one or two points on which he would like to have some information. He asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether when Consols or Reduced stood in the names of two or more trustees the assent of all or a majority of them would be required, or whether one would be sufficient, as in the case of dividends? It often happened that one might be absent; it would frequently be difficult to get all the consents; and the amount standing in the name of trustees was so immense that the question was one of importance. Then there was another point which had caused some doubt and anxiety, on which he should like to know the view of the right hon. Gentleman. It had happened in a great many cases—indeed, in thousands of cases—that annuities had been left by will, and the trustees had purchased enough Government Stock to provide the annuity, and had then parted with the residuary estate. But when the conversion was made the Stock would be no longer sufficient to provide the annuity. Suppose, for instance, an annuity of £100 had been left—which was a very common amount—and the trustees had purchased £3,333 Stock. This sum would, of course, no longer produce the amount of the annuity; and, therefore, he asked on whom would the loss fall? The estate might have been wound up; would, then, the trustees be personally liable? Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would say a word on this point, and consider whether he would not introduce into the Bill words, if necessary, to settle the difficulty. Before sitting down he might just say that while the last conversion proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh did not effect all that he had hoped for, it was only due to him to recognize that his proposals had materially helped to facilitate the operation now proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East

Wolverhampton had been very severe on the clause with reference to recognized agents, and, he thought, also somewhat unjust to bankers. He seemed to imply that they would advise their clients to take Stock, which otherwise they would not do, for the sake of the small commission which would be paid. But in the case of small amounts it was obvious that a commission of 1*s.* 6*d.* was a meagre temptation, and when large Stocks were dealt with the holders of them were quite able to judge for themselves. The right hon. Gentleman objected to commissions altogether. It was not commissions that were objectionable in matters of business, but the secret commissions; commissions placed in Act of Parliament were known to everybody; and he thought it was going rather out of the way, under those circumstances, to express so large an amount of indignation. Bankers would not advise their customers to assent to the conversion unless they did so themselves. Moreover, what did it amount to? Supposing the 1*s.* 6*d.* commission were not offered, every holder of Consols or New Threes who wished to convert would certainly have to pay his agent some slight amount for the trouble of conversion. This was the more desirable because so much was held by trustees, who might well be prevented from converting if it involved a payment which it might be difficult for them to make. In fact, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was simply saying that the expense of conversion should not fall on the holder of the Stock, but upon the Government.

Mr. TYSSEN AMHERST (Norfolk, S.W.) said, he must congratulate his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the reception which had been awarded to his proposal. At the same time, he feared that under the measure as it now stood, not only great inconvenience but in some cases actual injustice might result from the scheme; first to those who saw in their investment in the Funds as they thought an unvarying income without any trouble of collection. To that class, perhaps, no consolation could be given, but there was actual injustice in the case of those whose incomes were derived from interest on trust money when that money had been invested, under special limitation, in the Funds only. This he believed was a very common case where moneys had been left for charitable purposes. Indeed, there were two cases in which he himself was trustee of such money, and where he knew the investment of the money was limited to the Funds on purpose to secure an unvarying income for annual distribution. He hoped, therefore, that his right hon. Friend would either bring in a Bill, or insert a clause in the present measure, to authorize trustees whose powers were limited to the Parliamentary Stocks or Public Funds to invest in what were known as "Authorized Trustees' Securities," and in that way save those persons whose incomes, as far as they arose from investments limited to the Funds, from a hardship which would amount to no less than a permanently increased Income Tax of 1*s.* 8*d.* in the pound, to be increased after a certain number of years, and that, too, in many cases where Income Tax was not now demanded.

Mr. S. HOARE (Norwich) said, that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) might have treated the bankers differently than he had done in supposing that they would recommend small holders of Stock to come into the conversion scheme of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the sake of a commission of 1*s.* 6*d.* per cent. They were all aware that difficulty and hardship would arise from the lowering of the interest; but the fact that the bankers had agreed to the change appeared to him to have shown that the time had come for the change, and that there was little or no choice in the matter. It seemed to be forgotten that the bankers were the largest holders of the Stocks now to be dealt with, and would be the largest losers by the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman. Those Members who had examined the accounts of Joint Stock Banks would have found that those banks, independently of the Bank of England, must hold upwards of £50,000,000 of the Stocks now to be changed. The result would be, if they got 1*s.* 6*d.* commission, that they would lose something like £110,000 or £120,000 a-year, and in a very short time £225,000 a-year. It might, of course, be said that they could afford to lose the money; but did not the fact show that, at all events, the bankers accepted the change, and that any Chancellor of the Exchequer who protected the interests of the country was bound to act according to that financial thermometer, which bankers were considered to be. If they remembered that the bankers held assets of £400,000,000 it would be seen that it was of importance to get outlets for the money; dividends had to be earned, and it was, therefore, absolutely necessary to find the best investments they could, and they did not want to see every good investment going up, as had been the case during the last few weeks. The hon. Member for London University (Sir John Lubbock) referred to the fact that while the volume of trade was increasing, we found, at the same time, so much money unemployed that this great Conversion Scheme could be carried out successfully, as there was no doubt it would be. There were several reasons which pointed to the solution of this fact. The great development of the Railway and Telegraph systems, almost more than anything else, had been the means of bringing distant countries into rapid and direct communication, and business organizations which required large amounts of capital only a few years ago could now be carried on with a comparatively small amount of capital. The vast increase, too, in joint stock enterprize had very much tended to lessen the general value of investments. In these days the bankers with those enormous deposits were obliged to find investments, with the result to those engaged in trade that they were able to lend at a cheap rate of interest merely because there was no other outlet. Even in trade itself money could be obtained very cheaply—indeed, at 1½ or 2 per cent. Surely, then, this country, with the best security any Empire of the world had ever held, ought not to be put in a worse position than the ordinary traders. At present there was no doubt that the scheme of his right hon. Friend could be carried out. The present value of money was such that he saw no difficulty in its being carried out successfully. At the same time, he did not think that the House should sanction the scheme if it felt that we were living in a time when money was only abnormally cheap for the moment. On the contrary, looking forward to the future, we had every reason for expecting that the best securities would command higher prices and pay less interest. At the present moment, the Stock of the London and North-Western Railway was at a price which paid scarcely 3 per cent. When the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) was before the country, matters were, indeed, different; the rate of interest obtained on such securities was then 3¾ or 4 per cent; but during the last four years a great change had occurred. And why had the present change come about? Because the communication between country and country had tended to make business to be carried on at the least possible profit, and that resulted in money being lent to trade at the smallest possible rate of interest. So that, whether in mercantile or in other matters, they found that there were very few people or countries who were ready to borrow money except at a considerably less rate of interest than they could do a few years ago. The financial condition of most foreign countries, and also of our Colonies, had immensely improved; and there was no reason to suppose that there would be such a change—unless it arose from some frightful calamity—as would put either the Colonies or foreign countries back so that they would have to borrow at a much higher rate of interest. As one who had been connected with business, he could not see that there was a prospect of seeing, for some years to come, our best securities very materially lower. Therefore, he felt strongly that no Chancellor of the Exchequer could have neglected the present opportunity. He felt that to have done so would have been an error on the part of the financial agent of this great country, as the right hon. Gentleman might be called, representing not only the Government and the country, but also representing those who were now stockholders, and who ought to be considered in every possible way. The hon. Baronet who proposed this Amendment was also a man of business, and might often be in a position in which he would have to negotiate loans for clients and otherwise; and if he employed an agent to obtain a loan, and afterwards found that it could have been obtained at ½ or ¼ per cent less interest, the hon. Baronet would probably think that the agent ought to have raised the loan at the cheapest rate. Then the taxpayers of the country had a right to the same advantage; and if they found a great railway obtaining money at a low rate of interest, they had a right to demand that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should obtain money for them at the same rate or cheaper. For that reason, he rejoiced that the scheme had been brought forward. He regretted to hear an hon. Member say that it would not effect a saving to the taxpayers; but he thought that it would effect a very material saving. When the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) introduced a Conversion Scheme, Mr. Hume expressed a hope "that they would also hear from the Chancellor of the Exchequer some scheme for the reduction of taxation." If that result followed from the scheme they were now discussing, they need not be afraid, as the hon. Baronet had suggested, that the Conservative Party would be held up to odium in the country. Hon. Gentlemen opposite might be equally held up to odium, because they had tried to do the same thing, although it was not their good fortune to carry their scheme through. It would be a great piece of good fortune if it were carried through now, and he rejoiced to think that it had been reserved for one who had been early connected with the City of London to bring forward that present scheme with every chance of success; and although some might suffer a little from the change proposed, he believed that in the future it would be felt that this Parliament had done a great work, and that 20, 30, or 40 years hence it would be found that it had led to great and very satisfactory results.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): Sir, I do not think that on the whole I can complain of the reception which the plans of the Government in regard to the conversion of the National Debt have met with from the House. I have now to allude to some general remarks that have been made, and to some particular and special questions that have been raised; but I should like first to make this preliminary observation. I am glad to think, from the absence of comment on this particular point, that in substance the terms that are offered in regard to the number of years and the progressive reduction from $2\frac{3}{4}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent interest have commended themselves to the House and the country; because, while objections have been taken to particular parts of the scheme, the general basis upon which it rests has not been assailed in the speeches to which we have listened. I think there is a general agreement in the House that it was the duty of the Government, if it saw its way to be able successfully to convert a large portion of the National Debt, to act and take that conversion in hand. I think that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) agrees to that proposition. It is agreed to generally by right hon. Gentlemen opposite; and I may say that the public generally are, I believe, convinced that the step is one which it is the bounden duty of the Government to take. For I do not think that there are many who will agree with the hon. Baronet the Member for North Antrim (Sir Charles Lewis), who moved the Amendment, however painful the position of many annuitants and others may be, that the fact that £120,000,000 of the Debt is held by persons possessing Stock below £2,000 is sufficient ground for our not proceeding with this scheme. Painful as that may be, the question is really this—is it the duty of the Government of this country to continue to pay a higher rate of interest than that at which it can borrow, because a reduction of the present rate of interest would fall hardly on a large class of smaller fundholders? Surely that is not a proposition which can be maintained by argument. I say that it would be better, if the case of these persons be hard—and no doubt it is hard—to supplement their incomes out of a Vote of money by this House—if we look at the matter simply from a charitable point of view—than to allow the present state of things to continue, and to make the country pay 3 per cent when it can borrow at a cheaper rate of interest. I think it is very likely that the hon. Baronet really overstated the number of persons who are in the situation that he described; because he assumed it as a general fact that if a person has £2,000 in Consols, that is his chief or only source of income. Now, it is within the personal knowledge, I am sure, of hon. Members that many persons who have sums below £2,000 in Consols are persons who have got other sources of income besides, and that you cannot treat them as if the whole or a large proportion of that class are simply dependent on their revenue from Consols. But even if that were so, I fail to see that it would be the duty of the Government to continue to pay those persons a higher rate of interest than is necessary, because it might be hard for them to forego any part of their present income. The hon. Baronet said it was a general belief of society that the Three per Cents were inflexible, and that they never would be dealt with. But after the previous measures of conversion which have been repeatedly carried out, it is scarcely possible to see how such an idea could be reasonably entertained; and I do not, therefore, think that I need labour that point or press it any further, except to say that, however hard may be the case of individuals, I do not think that would be a sufficient justification to arrest us in the course that we have taken. The hon. Baronet alluded to those persons who have invested in Consols through the Savings Banks. They will still receive 2¾ per cent, which is a higher rate of interest than that which is paid in the Post Office Savings Banks, and I should be very glad that if they should still continue to invest in Government Stocks, they should receive a higher interest than is paid by the Post Office Savings Banks. I may add that every means is being taken to circulate full information among all depositors in Savings Banks on these matters. This leads me to a further point—namely, the question of celerity. The hon. Baronet asked why they should act in that rapid way. Now I think that most hon. Members will agree that if this matter is to be dealt with at all it must be dealt with rapidly, and that out of regard for all the great interests concerned. As I have said, every step will be taken to circulate all possible information, and every opportunity will be given to persons to ascertain precisely what is going on; but in a large operation of this kind it would be most detrimental to the credit of the country, and lead to fluctuations in all kinds of securities, if it should be kept long hanging over people's heads. It is unfortunate, but it always happens at any time of doubt, that there is a great deal of speculation; and the sooner Consols can settle down again and people can know precisely what they are, the better it will be for all parties. I can assure the hon. Baronet, in regard to applications to the Court of Chancery, that arrangements will be made to relieve persons from the difficulty which he pointed out—namely, that they will have to apply to the Court of Chancery before April 12, and also in respect to costs. To-morrow morning there will be on the Paper, and placed in the hands of hon. Members, a certain number of Amendments dealing with these subjects. The large correspondence I have had and the suggestions which have been made to me by many hon. Members have put me in a position to make some further proposals for meeting what I may call the legal and technical difficulties of the case. As to annuitants, there will be a clause giving power to trustees to sell Consols and to invest in what are called Chancery securities; and ample power will be given to the Lord Chancellor to deal with the difficulties that arise in these cases. A question was put to me as regards the number of Trustees. The hon. Baronet the Member for London University (Sir John Lubbock) asked whether the assent of all the Trustees would be necessary? There will be a clause providing that a majority of the trustees may signify their assent or dissent, as the case may be. I will now address myself to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton, who has frequently addressed us on this side in a somewhat threatening tone. But I trust I shall give no offence to him when I say that it is more in manner than intention. The right hon. Gentleman called me rather severely to account both in his direct statement and more frequently by innuendo. I will give him a full explanation with regard to the Local Loans Stock. I will frankly admit to him that I looked, to a certain extent, to this Local Loans Stock as giving a kind of test as to what securities might be worth in the Market. He will remember the real reason why the Stock was created. I believe it was a reason which commended itself to his judgment. It was to establish a Local Loan Fund which should be separate and different from the general indebtedness of the country. The right hon. Gentleman suggested that in January I was prepared to deal with the conversion of the National Debt, and to create Two-and-Three-Quarters per Cent and Two-and-a-Half per Cent Stocks. I may say that I had come to no such conclusion in January, and I had not at that time a sufficient indication as to whether the operation was feasible or not. The House will remember that the Local Loans Stock was substituted for an equivalent amount of Three per Cent Stocks and for an open debt of about £10,000,000 due to the Public Works Loans Commissioners; and the £36,000,000 or £33,000,000 — the amount lies between the two—was put in the hands of the Trustees for the Savings Banks and the Post Office Savings Banks in lieu of the £37,000,000 which they held otherwise. That Stock was held by them in substitution of the Stock that was cancelled. The National Debt Commissioners held the Local Loans Stock for these two funds, which were under their control. The position was this—among their investments they held £37,000,000 of this new Stock, rightly described as running for 25 years at 3 per cent. Now, what was the value of that Stock? I think the right hon. Gentleman will be sufficiently just to say that past operations must not be looked at entirely from the point of view of the price at present, when conversion is within sight. No *ex post facto* judgment would be entirely fair in such a condition of things. In the beginning I always thought that the creation of this Stock would be a valuable indication of the Market. But I am bound to say that at the commencement—not because it was not a valuable Stock, but because it was a small Stock—the great operators of the Market did not look upon it with any favour. The right hon. Gentleman speaks as if the only test of the value of the Stock was the rate of interest at which it operates. That is entirely a mistake. It is the ready convertibility of the Stock which gives it in the Market a very great advantage, and many persons would prefer a Three per Cent Stock which was thoroughly current in the Market, but liable to conversion, to a Three per Cent Stock of a new character with which they were not familiarly acquainted. The consequence was that in the beginning there was a reluctance on the part of the Money Market to look with favour at the Stock. A high financial authority stated at the time that he did not believe he would be able to place £2,000,000 of this Stock. It was a somewhat serious matter to have £37,000,000 of Stock in the hands of the National Debt Commissioners which was not marketable and not rapidly saleable, and therefore the great object was to diminish the amount of the Stock. A good deal has been said of the fact that it exchanged Stock for Stock; but at the time it was considered that Consols were better than this new Stock, and some institutions of very high standing refused to exchange Stock for Stock. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners took a different view of the matter. They saw that the Stock guaranteed for 25 years answered their purpose admirably, and they were content to make an exchange Stock for Stock; and—looking to the fact that I was contemplating conversion—it was a great object, which I secured, to get by degrees the Stock into the hands of the National Debt Commissioners. Another transaction was made with the Bank of England, Stock for Stock, but not without difficulty; and as soon as persons heard that others had taken the Stock, then they suddenly began to grumble and say that they had not a chance of doing so. As soon as I understood that there was a desire for the Stock, I immediately gave instructions that it should be sold, and that the market value should be taken. Considerable transactions took place, not in very large amounts; but it was the object of the Government broker to distribute the Stock among as many persons as possible, so that the public might become familiar with it. Considerable transactions took place, and when the Stock reached a good price I offered £10,000,000 of it by tender. The price was not so high as might have been anticipated. Why was this? It was not on account of the value of the Stock itself, but partly because people would not believe that conversion was possible. That vitiates the test which the right hon. Gentleman applied, because the real market value could not be ascertained until it was certain that conversion would come. Consols were not at their proper position, and the value gave no indication, and the Local Loans Stock did not give sufficient indication, either because the bankers and the Market generally were against it, and it was a small Stock which could not compare with Consols. I trust that neither the right hon. Gentleman nor the House will make an *ex post facto* judgment of this matter, nor hold that either the Stock has been thrown away or that it has been improperly dealt with. The right hon. Gentleman asked what has become of the remainder. The remainder, some £18,000,000, is held by the National Debt Commissioners, and upon that they will be able to realize the full benefit of the high price at which the Stock now stands. Then I come to the side-light of the right hon. Gentleman upon the present operation. The right hon. Gentleman did not show us what that light was. He applied it; but he was so intent upon dwelling upon the way in which the Local Loans Stock was treated, that he did not draw his moral, and say that the price was too high or too low for conversion. I do not think that I have gone wrong in fixing the price at which the conversion now takes place. In an extremely difficult matter like this, it is very hard to say whether the terms are too high or too low; but I venture to think that no general attack has been made upon the terms. The right hon. Gentleman raised another point with regard to agency commission, and he put it—I hope I am not using too strong a phrase—somewhat offensively when he said that the agency commission was a bribe offered to bankers in order to induce them to advise their clients in favour of the conversion. One or two hon. Members have already exposed the unfairness of such a contention. But the right hon. Gentleman is entirely wrong when he says all the banks are with me. I can assure him that four of the most influential banks in London have been those most opposed to the conversion scheme which I have in hand. These banks deal very largely in Consols, and one of them is likely to lose £10,000 a-year, which will afterwards be £20,000 a-year by the scheme. I do not think that the commission will be such as will in the slightest degree or in any degree mitigate that loss. I am extremely anxious that this matter should be properly understood. I have heard of one bank in London where they have had to take on 20 additional clerks to deal with the work arising out of the conversion, and that the cost in labour and correspondence will absorb the commission. But we have not to deal with bankers; those whom we have mainly to do with are the stockholders; and the right hon. Gentleman asked whether the stockholder ought not to get the commission of 1*s.* 6*d.* himself. If he were, he would have to pay, not that sum, but possibly a higher amount to the broker or banker to convert it into Consols; and the object of this commission is to give the conversion clear of any cost to all the small fundholders and all the others as well. A question was asked as to the position of the solicitor whose client, a fundholder, writes to him, and asks him for advice. As he would be entitled to receive this commission, he will give this advice gratis; and, far from admitting the way in which the right hon. Gentleman has put it, this is practically limiting the expense that will be put upon the stockholders, for it is very possible the stockholders would have to pay a higher commission and brokerage if this limit were not inserted in the Bill. It is, perhaps, too much to expect that the brokers, or the solicitors, or the bankers would act gratis for their numerous clients; and I do not think that, out of goodwill to the Government, they would forego all commissions or agency expenses upon these transactions. The amount, no doubt, is large when it is added up; but then the transaction altogether, of course, is upon a very large scale. I should be quite prepared to meet the right hon. Gentleman in argument with regard to this matter; but I regret the tone he took and the manner in which he wished to put it before the House, as if the great banking establishments were to be bribed to give judicious advice to their clients by this small commission upon their Stocks. Well, then, I have replied to one or two points.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: Will the right hon. Gentleman refer to the precedent which he promised to mention?

MR. GOSCHEN: I thought the right hon. Gentleman would have remembered the precedent in which there was paid a commission, not of 1*s.* 6*d.*, but of £2 10*s.*

An hon. MEMBER: Who by?

Mr. GOSCHEN: In the case of the Suez Canal. Well, the right hon. Gentleman did not ask me whether they were good or bad precedents, but he said it had never been done.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: I said there was no precedent of the English Government offering a financial agent a commission to advise his clients to accept terms offered by the Government. That was a question of the purchase of shares on which the Government paid a brokerage of enormous amount.

Mr. GOSCHEN: The right hon. Gentleman has now placed two parts of his argument together. He was properly answered by another hon. Member, who showed the enormous difference between the secret commission of which he spoke and the open agency commission which is embodied in the Bill. But the right hon. Gentleman, though he spoke of this being a commission to advise, as he says, where does he find that it is a commission to advise?

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: Because it is not paid unless the advice is successful. Unless the client accepts the conversion the advice will not be paid for.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Well, I must say that is an unworthy argument of the right hon. Gentleman. Of course, he reminds me that a great deal of advice may be given without being successful at all; but the right hon. Gentleman says—and there he must be in error—the agents are paid in order to advise. Now, can the right hon. Gentleman stand by that? He must know that that is not the reason why they are paid; they are paid because of the large trouble involved, and unless this trouble is paid for as we suggest the cost in a large number of cases will fall on the stockholders themselves. I do not regret being met fairly in argument; but I do regret the aspersions conveyed in the speech and in the explanations of the right hon. Gentleman. Then the right hon. Gentleman said that it would be no relief to the taxpayer. Upon that point, too, he has been answered. Whatever happens, it is a relief to the taxpayer. Whether the whole of this money saved by this scheme is applied to the reduction of the National Debt, or whether a portion only of it is applied, whether the money is divided between relief to the immediate taxpayers and the payment of the National Debt, or whatever takes place, it is clearly a relief to those whose financial interests are concerned. It is a relief to the people of this country, and it really seems to me as if the right hon. Gentleman threw out that remark in order to remove any impression of the value of this operation. He said, in effect, to the taxpayers—"You will not be the gainers by it. The scheme is not worthy of consideration by the public at large, because it will not assist the taxpayers of the Kingdom." I am bound to say I did not find that encouragement to the general plan of the Government which was accorded to it so fully and generously by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) at an earlier stage of these proceedings. The right hon. Gentleman further asked, What are you going to do with the Bank of England and the £13,000,000? Well, it was not necessary to speak of a threatening measure. It is perfectly clear that the Bank of England cannot continue to receive 3 per cent interest upon her debt when the credit of the country is put down from 3 to 2¾ per cent. It will clearly be necessary to make fresh arrangements, and the Bank is perfectly aware that it will be necessary so to do. And that reminds me to say that the value of this measure does not consist only in the amount actually saved. If the credit of the country once settles down at 2¾ instead of 3 per cent, whenever we may be called upon to borrow, whatever operations may be necessary, we shall have the full advantage of the fall, and it is that consideration which makes it to such a degree the duty of the Government to proceed with this matter. A question was raised as to whether the 5*s.* bonus should be treated as capital or as income. I think a very good argument may be made as to whether it ought to be treated as capital or income. I have well weighed this matter, and, on the whole, I am inclined to think, personally, that it is rather capital than income; but the inconvenience of investing 5*s.*, or 10*s.*, or 15*s.* is so great that Trustees would be in a very disagreeable position if they were directed to treat the bonus as capital; and so, in order to facilitate transactions of this character, Trustees may treat it as income if they think fit. I trust the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton will use his great authority to persuade those who would spend this money in an injudicious manner to add it to their capital, because they will be fully at liberty to take that course. In conclusion, I must apologize if I have not touched on various points, some of them of a legal character. I can assure the House every possible attention will be paid so as to make this measure work smoothly and remove those difficulties from which it is not free, and from which no conversion of the Public Debt can possibly be free.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): I shall not detain the House more than a few minutes, but I am anxious to follow my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) at once. I wish to say that the scheme which he has proposed should, in my opinion, be pronounced, on the whole, to be a good one, and that no consideration of what happened three or four years ago—when it fell to my lot to carry through a Bill for the conversion of the National Debt which was not as successful as I hope his will be—will have the smallest influence upon my mind in discussing this. I must, in the first instance, refer to some words which fell from hon. Gentlemen on both sides as to the treatment which the scheme of 1884 received from certain bankers, as compared with that which the present scheme has received. What I wish to remind the House of is that in 1884, when many of their customers applied to certain bankers for advice whether they should accept the plan of that year, they were told—"No; you will get better terms." I am receiving many letters from persons repeating to me how hard their case is; that when they applied to know whether they should accept the scheme of 1884 they were told they would get better terms; whereas now, when the terms offered by the Government are no less than 6½ or 7 per cent worse, the same persons are told by their bankers that they had better accept the terms. To this I have simply replied that bankers are not infallible. I hope in that way I have done no harm to them and no harm to my right hon. Friend. I do not agree with the view of the hon. Baronet the Member for North Antrim (Sir Charles Lewis), who opened this debate. We ought, I admit, to be as tender as possible to small holders, taking care that they have sufficiently good notice and not put to any disadvantage. But, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) said, our duty is primarily to the taxpayers. It is our business to see that the country does not pay more interest to its creditors than the state of the Money Market requires; and if, therefore, such a scheme can be carried through with the assistance of the Money Market, it is our business to give the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer all the assistance in our power. I hope he will be able to carry the scheme through. Beyond these general remarks I should like to say a few words. In the first place, I observe that my right hon. Friend has been asked to adopt some measures under which persons who now hold Consols and other Government Stocks under settlements should have these powers enlarged, so that they may invest in Railway Debentures, Corporation Stocks, or Colonial Loans. But I hope he will resist this, and, at the outside, only sanction investments in what are called Chancery Funds. [Mr. Goschen assented.] I am glad to see that he agrees with me. Again, as to the recent issue of Local Loans Stock, my right hon. Friend has told us in the course of his speech that in January, although he did not know the details of the plan he would bring forward in March, still, as a matter of fact, he did then contemplate conversion, so that when he issued his Local Loans Stock he must have had conversion in view. What I wish to ask him is why, under these circumstances, he did not, as was suggested here, strengthen the Two-and-a-Half per Cents? At any rate, would he not have done better to postpone the issue of the Local Loans Stock until after the contemplated conversion? I think he ought to give us his reasons for having omitted to do what would have saved a considerable amount of money—namely, held his hands for six weeks, and then, after laying his conversion scheme before the country, manipulated—using the word in its correct sense—the Local Loans Stock. Again, as to the commission of 1*s*. 6*d*. per cent, my right hon. Friend said that there was a precedent in the Suez Canal commission paid to Messrs. Rothschild.

Mr. GOSCHEN: It had been said that there was no example of a commission. I merely dissented from that particular proposition. There is absolutely no parallel whatever.

Mr. CHILDERS: Why, then, did he interject the remark? Surely, the Suez Canal transaction was, in his own opinion, *pessimi exempli*. But my right hon. Friend argued that it was an object to obtain the goodwill of the bankers.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I never said anything about obtaining the goodwill of the bankers. I said they were put to actual expenses for their clients, and that unless they were paid in the way suggested in the Bill they would charge it to their clients.

Mr. CHILDERS: Surely it is obvious that the bankers will not receive this commission unless they give advice in one direction. If they give advice not to accept the Government's offer, of course they will receive nothing. In each case they will have correspondence and trouble. Finally, I should like my right hon. Friend to say whether he proposes to alter the total sum applied to the interest and redemption of the National Debt? If not—and I hope he will leave the present arrangement untouched — something will be done to counteract the mischievous reduction of last year in the amount of the Sinking Fund, as the new Sinking Fund will gain by whatever is saved in interest. In conclusion, I have only to assure the right hon. Gentleman that I have no desire to criticize his proposals in any spirit of hostility. On the contrary, I think them, on the whole, very wise and judicious proposals, and if he will kindly explain the points to which I have referred I shall be satisfied.

Mr. GOSCHEN: With regard to the Local Loans Stock, the right hon. Gentleman says that it would have been an advantageous arrangement to wait to the present moment, but then he forgets that since the time that the first arrangement was made a conversion scheme has become possible, and by no possible foresight could I be able to judge of the effects so long in advance. I was anxious to strengthen the position of the National Debt Commissioners, and, before the conversion came on, to withdraw a certain amount of Stock from the Market, so as to have in my possession saleable Stocks available for any emergency, instead of unsaleable Stocks, as was the case then. As regards the second point, he asks why I did not take Two-and-a-Half and Two-and-Three-Quarter Stock. I consider that I have been better advised in following the course I have adopted rather than that suggested by the right hon. Gentleman. It was desirable to see the difference in the interval between the different Stocks, and some time was required to make that out; but at the present moment I consider that the power is established to a certain extent. But the argument involved in this question is a larger one than I can venture upon. The right hon. Gentleman asks me what is to become of savings. I prefer not to answer that question until I know what the saving is. It is well not to count your chickens before they are hatched. I would rather, therefore, with the indulgence of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, not make a premature statement. As to the third question, relating to the Bank of England, I am quite aware of the situation in which the matter is left. The relations between the State and the Bank of England will have to be re-adjusted. I thank the right hon. Gentleman very much for the courtesy and friendliness with which he has spoken. I hope we may get the second reading to-day, as in the Committee there will be ample opportunities for discussing the more technical points of the question.

Mr. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) said, he should like to make a few remarks before the Bill was read a second time. He was not at all surprised that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not given any explanation of what he was going to do with the advantage which resulted from this operation. Twelve months was a long time to look forward to; but he must express the hope that the right hon. Gentleman would not use the advantage so gained to diminish or take away from the amount in reduction of the National Debt. He thought that every year required more and more the maintenance of Sir Stafford Northcote's maximum, and that they should not alter the amount that went in reduction of the Debt. The right hon. Gentleman had followed the precedents that were applicable to this operation, and he congratulated him and the country on the prospect of complete success. The difficulty had always been in respect of Consols where 12 months' notice had prevented the action of previous Chancellors of the Exchequer. It was asked why the scheme of his right hon. Friend the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) was not successful when it was brought forward four years ago, and why the Local Loan in the month of January did not secure better terms. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh had replied to inquiries made of him, that bankers were not infallible. The same view had been expressed in a coarser way in the expression—"There are no such fools as the Three per Cents." That proverb had been verified four years ago, and he might say also by the conduct of those who had declined to take the Local Loan Fund. The right hon. Gentleman offered 5*s.* as a bonus if holders would accept conversion. But what did that amount to? He presumed his right hon. Friend would not deal with the question of the Debt or Conversion till next year. He must wait 12 months before he could affect the holders of Consols; and if they did not accept conversion they received 3 per cent, so that there was no advantage in that 5*s.* bonus. Here came in, then, the part of the scheme which he confessed he did not much like—namely, the 1*s.* 6*d.* payable to bankers. He happened to be a Trustee, and when the scheme of 1884 was brought in the bankers left him alone; but now he had already been served by a friendly banker—one of the first in the City—with a notice which was awaiting his signature. It was a singular circumstance that the bank sent round these circulars, whereas they did nothing four years ago.

Mr. GOSCHEN: The matter is so important that I must interrupt my hon. Friend. I cannot accept the proposition that I should have to wait another year. If the conversion is perfectly successful, there will be nothing to hinder Parliament from immediately giving notice to the other two classes.

Mr. COURTNEY said, his object in rising was not simply to show the position of the holders of Consols and Reduced, but to bring out the position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Chancellors of the Exchequer had usually held that they were blocked by the immense masses of the Consols. His right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian, in his great Budget Speech of 1853, referred to this great mass of Consols, which was greater then than now. It had been held that the Chancellor of the Exchequer could not attack that great amount; he could not attack it in the total, but he could do so in detail. Notices need not attach to the whole, but could be applied to part in sums of not less than £500,000. Supposing that the right hon. Gentleman felt himself courageous enough to give notice that he would pay off £20,000,000 if the holders did not come in; when the books were closed, it would be easy to arrange the whole amount of Consols in groups of £20,000,000, and to draw lots for the amounts to be paid off. There would be no need of special notice if the bonds were to be paid off in that way, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be able to secure the redemption on as good terms as he now secured the reduction of the other Stock.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked of the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he could inform hon. Members from Ireland what would be the effect of the scheme on the fund of a million and one-third appropriated for the pensions of national school teachers. He had used his best endeavours to ascertain how that fund would be affected, but had been unable to gather any information on the subject.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Perhaps the hon. Member will be good enough to put the Question to me on another day, between which and the present time I will have the matter thoroughly examined.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Main Question put.

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Tuesday* next, at Two of the clock.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked if any other Business than the Committee stage of the Bill would be taken on Tuesday?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster) said, that no Business of a contentious character would be taken.

SUPPLY.—REPORT.

Resolutions [15th March] *reported.*

First and Second Resolutions *agreed to.*

(3.) "That a sum, not exceeding £3,614,903, be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charge for the following Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1889."

Resolution read a first and second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) said, that before the Resolution was put, he should like to make some remarks on a matter which had been the subject of several Questions put by him to the Leader of the House. He was bound to say that the answers of the right hon. Gentleman had appeared to him to be evasive and contradictory, and if his treatment of the Civil Service was in correspondence with those answers it was perfectly impossible that the members of it could have any confidence in the administration. He asked whether the Board of Inland Revenue had last year addressed to the civil servants a letter containing these words—"You cannot be permitted to lecture on, or publicly speak on, or take any public part in the discussion on Home Rule;" and whether Sir Alfred Slade was at that time a prominent member of the Primrose League? He wished to disclaim any intention of making a personal attack on Sir Alfred Slade, and he was perfectly prepared to admit that he was a man of high character and a valuable public servant. The reply of the right hon. Gentleman was that the words quoted were used by the Board of Inland Revenue, and that they expressed the rule which obtained throughout the Civil Service with regard to all shades of politics; he admitted that Sir Alfred Slade was trustee for a certain portion of the funds of the Primrose League; but as such he considered that he could not be regarded as a prominent member of the League. Now there was in that answer the statement made, at any rate by implication, that Sir Alfred Slade was not a prominent member of the Primrose League. But what was the fact? As the right hon. Gentleman himself had admitted Sir Alfred Slade, the Receiver General of Inland Revenue, was not only a custodian of some of the funds, but he was actually one of the highest officials of the organization. He was Chairman of the General Purposes Committee, and on the Finance Committee. The right hon. Gentleman had admitted that this was so. He was asked, further, whether that brought him within the departmental rule against being a member of any political organization, and his answer was that he was trustee of some of the funds of the Primrose League, and as such he was *ex-officio* member of the Committee, but that he had abstained from taking any part in the proceedings of the League which would lead to an infringement of the rule laid down by the Board of Inland Revenue for its officers—namely, that they were to abstain from taking any part in or speaking at any political meeting. They had the further statement that Sir Alfred Slade was acting within his rights in belonging to a political organization, provided only that he did not take part in or speak at any political meeting. Now, he proceeded to put a further question to the right hon. Gentleman, as to whether the members of the Civil Service were at liberty to belong to any political organization?

It being ten minutes to Seven of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till *this day.*

The House suspended its Sitting at Seven of the clock.

The House resumed its Sitting at Nine of the clock.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do not leave the Chair."

EGYPT—THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL.—RESOLUTION.

Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.), in rising to move the following Resolution:—

"That this House disapproves the acceptance by a Minister of the Crown, holding the Office of Judge Advocate General, of the duties of professional advocate to the ex-Khedive Ismail in the prosecution of a hostile claim against the Egyptian Government as contrary to Constitutional usage and precedent, as liable to serious misconstruction Abroad and at Home, and as calculated to introduce undesirable complications into our relations with Foreign and friendly countries,"

said, he hoped that it would be unnecessary for him to disclaim any desire to treat it from a personal or even a Party point of view. The action which he ventured to criticize was so novel—it was admitted by the First Lord of the Treasury to be absolutely without precedent—and it would, if drawn into a precedent, involve such serious consequences that he hoped it might be discussed, as every Constitutional question ought to be discussed, in an impartial spirit. Before approaching it, however, he desired, having held the Office of Judge Advocate General for more than five years, and having a very decided opinion as to its duties, to dispel, if he could, some singular popular misconceptions which had grown up as to its character. There were some persons who believed that military law was like martial law—in other words, that it was no law at all. But every officer knew, and every lawyer ought to know, that that was an entire mistake—that, in fact, military law, though administered by different tribunals, was in reality more precisely defined than civil law, the fundamental distinction being, as he took it, that the Queen, who was the head and fountain of justice in both cases, in one case delegated the administration of the civil authority to the Judges of the land, and in the other case, that of military law, retained it herself as part of her Prerogative. But on the principle that the Queen could do no wrong it was necessary that she should have at her hand a Constitutional Adviser to counsel her on matters relating to military law. That Constitutional Adviser was the Judge Advocate General, who was responsible to the Sovereign on the one hand and to Parliament on the other for the due administration of military law, and who was, therefore, necessarily a Privy Councillor as well as a Member of the House of Commons, and had, he believed, the privilege, which no other Minister except the Prime Minister enjoyed, of asking for a personal interview with the Queen whenever his duties required it. He would merely add that anyone curious as to such matters would find the doctrine he had laid down stated almost in the same words in the 27th chapter of Clode's *Military Forces of the Crown*, the standard authority on the subject. Now it followed from this that the Judge Advocate General was not merely a Crown Advocate, like the Attorney General and the Solicitor General, but for all practical purposes a Judge; indeed, in his Letters Patent he was called a Judge—

"The Judge Marshal of all our Land Forces, both horse and foot"—

and those Letters Patent contained this provision—

"And our express will and pleasure is that all officers and soldiers of our Land Forces obey him, the said Judge Marshal in that behalf constituted as aforesaid."

When he (Mr. Osborne Morgan) was Judge Advocate General the express point arose. He had set aside the conviction of a soldier, on the ground that the evidence did not support the finding. The Adjutant General disputed his ruling and insisted that the matter should be referred to the Law Officers. He replied that while he had the greatest respect for the opinion of the then Attorney General (Sir Henry James)—whom he did not now see in his place, and whose attendances at the House, he was sorry to say, were becoming, like angels' visits, few and far between—the matter was one for his (Mr. Osborne Morgan's) decision, and not for that of the Attorney General, and that it might as well be contended that a decision of the Queen's Bench should be referred for review to the Solicitor General of the day. He added that if such a course were taken, he should insist upon the matter being referred to the Cabinet, and that if the Cabinet decided against him, he should at once resign Office. He need hardly say that he heard no more of the matter, and that from that day to the day he resigned Office the judicial ruling of the Judge Advocate General on legal matters was never again questioned. He mentioned the matter for two reasons. First of all, that the Secretary of State for War, whose absence he also regretted, should understand what a grave Constitutional change he was seeking to introduce in abolishing this ancient Office and what grave consequences it might involve both to officers and soldiers, for at present the Judge Advocate General was the only man who stood between the soldier and an unjust or illegal conviction, and he could not help thinking, therefore, that it would be a bad day for the British soldier when that Office was abolished. But his other and principal reason for mentioning this was because he was always under the impression that the fact of his being a Judge disqualified the Judge Advocate General from taking private practice, it being a universal and most salutary rule of English jurisprudence that no Judge was allowed to practise at the Bar. As to the fact itself, there was until lately, he apprehended, no doubt. Indeed, it was admitted to the fullest extent by the First Lord of the Treasury, who said, in answer to a Question, that before 1885 there was no precedent of a Judge Advocate General practising in the Courts of Law, though he drew a distinction, which he (Mr. Osborne Morgan) confessed he did not understand, between Courts of Law and Courts of Arbitration. There were at present two ex-Judge Advocate Generals in the House, who would, he hoped, if they took part in the debate, confirm this. He could only speak for himself. When he was made Judge Advocate General it was made a *sine quâ non* that he should retire from the Bar. He accordingly, at considerably personal sacrifice, returned all his briefs, and had never put on his wig and gown since. He might mention that at the time he had a conversation with the late Sir George Jessel, perhaps the highest authority on the subject, who treated the mere suggestion that the Judge Advocate General should practise as a barrister as something almost too absurd to be argued. When, therefore, the Prime Minister said, as he was reported to have done, that this controversy was of a legal character, and—

> "That there was no harm in the present Judge Advocate General taking the business now in question, as well as other business, it being a well-understood rule that the Legal Advisers of the Crown are entitled to increase their business so long as it does not interfere with their official duties,"

he made, if he might venture to say so, a somewhat rash assertion, to say the least of it. But he was told that before the right hon. and learned Gentleman gave the Government the benefit of his services, he made a special bargain with the Prime Minister that he should be allowed to retain his private practice, and he was told that he fortified himself by the opinions of several most distinguished lawyers, to which he (Mr. Osborne Morgan) was bound to defer, although he could not agree with them. He did not, therefore, rest his objection to the course taken by the right hon. and learned Gentleman merely upon that high Constitutional ground, but upon another ground which he hoped would be intelligible to the House—namely, that "a man cannot serve two masters." A Minister did not get £2,000 a-year from the country for doing nothing, and the rule he (Mr. Osborne Morgan) had stated applied equally to every Member of the Government, except, of course, the Attorney and Solicitor Generals, who from their position were required to practise at the Bar. Did the present Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews), one of the ablest advocates who ever practised at the Bar, or the Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst), who was Solicitor General for eight months, or the First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket), who was Irish Solicitor General in a former Government, find time to practise at the Bar? Then, why should the Judge Advocate General do so? For he defied any man who attended during official hours in the Office of Judge Advocate General in Great George Street to find time for practice at the Bar. All he could say was that Mr. Mellor, who succeeded the present Judge Advocate General in 1886, told him, two days ago, that he found the duties of the Office combined with his Parliamentary work so onerous and exacting that he was virtually compelled to cease from private practice while he held Office. He knew that the Office had been called a sinecure. Of course any office might be made a sinecure, if its holder devolved its duties on his subordinates. It was not part of his case to say that the right hon. and learned Gentleman did that; he (Mr. Osborne Morgan) did not for a moment suggest it, remembering the able services rendered by him in his able Report on Woolwich Arsenal, which he was glad to acknowledge; but he must express his surprise that he had found time to go out for a lengthened period to an inaccessible country like Egypt, to so distant a place as Cairo—rather a singular mode, by the way, of "taking a holiday," when at any moment his presence might have been required in Westminster to decide a question involving the life or liberty of a British soldier, or the honour of a British officer. He should be the last man to cavil at a Minister taking a holiday; but when he held the Office and went away for a short holiday he always kept within call. But it was right that the House should know in what sense this Office was a sinecure. It revised all general and district courts martial, and occasionally regimental courts martial. All these were sent to him, except those in India, as well as some regimental courts martial. These courts martial in 1881 amounted to 7,474; in 1882, to 6,513; in 1883, to 6,026; in 1884, to 6,108; a total in four years of 26,121. No doubt, many of these cases were of the simplest description, but others, especially courts martial on officers, involved the most anxious attention and took him several days to decide. In 1881 he set aside wholly or partially 246 convictions, or about 4 per cent—not an inconsiderable percentage of injustice or illegality, especially if looked at from the point of view of those who were unjustly convicted. The total number of convictions set aside or modified between 1881 and 1885 was 746. But these courts martial did not constitute the whole work of the Office, which was greatly increased when in 1881, at the request of his right hon. Friend the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), then Home Secretary, the Office took over the duties of Legal Adviser to the War Office, formerly performed by Mr. Clode, thus saving the country £1,600 a-year. He had made a calculation of the number of letters and opinions sent out from the Office when he held it, nearly all of which came under his personal notice, and found they averaged, not 100, as Mr. O'Dowd, in his evidence before the Select Committee of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, was no doubt erroneously reported to have said, but 800 in one year. All that showed that if the right hon. and learned Gentleman, instead of taking his holiday in Egypt, had remained at home he would have found plenty to do. But that was only a small part of his indictment. His case was that by going out to Egypt as a distinguished Member of the British Government, with the *prestige* and glamour with which the title of Her Majesty's Judge Advocate General would necessarily impress the Egyptian mind, he got far better terms for his client than he could have done if he had gone out as a private individual. And even if that were denied, and he had no doubt it would be, the mere fact that he held a highly paid and important Ministerial post under the Queen ought *ipso facto* to have disqualified him from acting as the paid agent and advocate of a foreign Prince. True, the First Lord of the Treasury said that the right hon. and learned Gentleman was counsel to Ismail before he was Judge Advocate General. What possible difference could that make? When a man had two conflicting duties thrust upon him, his duty was clear—he was bound to elect between the two, and the right hon. and learned Gentleman was bound either to throw up his retainer, or to decline Office. But then they were told, further, that he did offer to place his resignation in Lord Salisbury's hands before going to Egypt, and that the resignation was not accepted—at least, that no reply was given to the offer. That might diminish the responsibility of the Judge Advocate General, but it seemed to increase that of the Prime Minister, for, rightly or wrongly, the impression had got firm hold of the public mind, both in England and Egypt, that Lord Salisbury, intending to abolish the Office, kept it alive in order that the right hon. and learned Gentleman might be able to go out to Egypt as the Judge Advocate General of his Government. And he was bound to say that the language of Lord Salisbury gave colour to that conjecture, for he was reported to have said—

> "The matter was practically settled, not by the Egyptian Government, but by the Egyptian Government acting through the medium of Sir Edgar Vincent. On the other hand, I believe it was really a great advantage to the country that Mr. Marriott was the counsel of the ex-Khedive, and it was fortunate that the interests of the ex-Khedive were committed to the charge of an Englishman."

He (Mr. Osborne Morgan) could not dive into the mind of Lord Salisbury—God forbid that he should try. But he must be pardoned for saying that these words exhibited a most extraordinary confusion of thought. The Prime Minister had obviously confounded the duties of a counsel with the duties of an English Minister. The duty of a counsel, as every lawyer knew, was to do the very best he could for his client, even if he happened to be the very meanest criminal that ever stood at the bar of the Old Bailey. The duty of an English Minister was to do the very best he could for his country. He could understand the argument if right hon. and learned Gentleman had gone out as the Emissary of Great Britain, as his right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) lately went out to America on that great Mission for which he deserved so well of his country. But the Judge Advocate General did not go out to Egypt carrying the commission of the British Government in his pocket. He carried in his pocket the retainer of the ex-Khedive, Ismail Pasha. He did not go out as the Emissary of Great Britain. He went out as the advocate, the paid advocate, the highly-paid advocate, of Ismail Pasha. Now, what was our present position in Egypt? It was a very peculiar, a very delicate, and a very responsible one. We occupied the country with our forces, and for all practical purposes we governed it. At any rate, it was certain that the Egyptian Government would think twice before it resisted the pressure of Lord Salisbury's little finger. Surely, under these circumstances, it was clear that we ought to abstain not only from such pressure, but from all appearance of such pressure, except for the best possible reasons. Now, what kind of idea would an Egyptian Prime Minister be likely to form of the powers and jurisdiction of Her Britannic Majesty's Judge Advocate General. We had seen that the English Prime Minister had formed a very hazy idea of those powers; but what impression would the title make upon the Oriental mind? An Egyptian could hardly understand that—as was once said in that House—that functionary was neither an advocate, nor a Judge, nor a General. If he thought anything at all about it, he would probably surmise, on the principle of *Omne ignotum pro magnifico*, that he combined all three characters in himself—that he was an advocate to urge his client's claims, a Judge to decide them, and a General to enforce them—that being the Oriental idea of government. At any rate, one thing was plain—it was certain that when the Judge Advocate General made his appearance in Cairo, the resistance of the Egyptian Government to Ismail's claims fell down like the walls of Jericho before the trumpet of Joshua. And now he came to the transaction itself. Now, of course, he was not behind the scenes. He had to get his information from sources open to everybody. Indeed, the matter was arranged in such a hole-and-corner way—so "squared," if he might make use of the term—that it was very difficult to get at the real facts; but there were hon. Friends to follow him in the debate, who knew more of Egypt than he did, and who would supplement any deficiencies of which he might be guilty. One thing he must say; he did think it was rather hard that the Papers in the matter had not been laid before the House earlier, but had been kept to the last moment—in fact, he very much doubted whether, but for the persistence of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), they would have been laid before the House at all, or, at least, whether they would not have been sprung upon them in the course of the debate. He repeated that he did not think that quite fair; for he considered that when a man brought forward a Motion of that kind, he should have a few hours' notice of the documents on which the Government intended to found their case in reply. Was that a course worthy of the Government? Even now there were only five or six copies in the Library, and that fact necessarily placed the House at a considerable disadvantage. It was a mere accident that he saw the Correspondence at all, and he could only say that, having read the Papers, he found the case much worse than he had anticipated. They all knew who Ismail Pasha was. He was the deposed Sovereign of Egypt, and, to say the least, a Sovereign not deposed for his virtues. He did not like to speak against an absent man; but Ismail Pasha had an able advocate in the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Brighton. Most Oriental Sovereigns in such a position were only too glad to be able to escape with their heads on their shoulders; but Ismail Pasha was fortunate enough to get from the country he had misgoverned a Civil List amounting to £86,473 annually. According to those Papers, of that sum £40,000 was payable—he was quoting from *The Times* of the 10th February—to Ismail himself and his three wives and the remainder to his five sons and two daughters. The contention of Ismail, according to *The Times*, was that all those pensions were his, to be disposed of as he liked after his death. The contention of the Egyptian Government, on the other hand, was that upon the death of the recipient they fell into the general Civil List of the Kingdom. But the case was not put nearly so high by Sir Evelyn Baring, who, in his despatch of the 14th of February, says—

> "The allowances were, no doubt, of a temporary character as regards those who were in actual enjoyment of them. The Khedive could, it is believed, from a strictly legal point of view, at any moment have revoked the allowances paid to Ismail Pasha or any other member of the family. But he could not have devoted the amount thus saved to the expenditure of the Administration."

That was to say, he could have applied them in payment of his own Civil List, and could, to that extent, have relieved the burdens on the Egyptian Exchequer. It was important to note this, for it disposed of the main justification set up for the bargain made by the right hon. Gentleman. But it was further contended by the Egyptian Government—and this, though not mentioned in the official Papers, was really the strongest and most important part of the case—that they had a counter claim against Ismail, and that he, by his fraudulent conduct, had forfeited his pension altogether upon a ground stated by *The Times* Correspondent in *The Times* of the 5th of January—namely, that

> "Since the arrangement by which Ismail ceded his lands as a tardy and partial recompense for a misappropriation to a large amount of State funds to his personal use, there is some reason to believe, it is said, that other properties of considerable amount were substracted from that cession by means of their nominal transfer to third parties. It was alleged, in fact, that since his deposition he (Ismail) had received large sums for the sale of property, the cession of which to the State he evaded by means of fictitious registrations."

Well, under those circumstances, it was not surprising that Ismail should have desired to commute these annual payments for a sum down. Independently of other considerations, a Turk at 58, with three wives, was not exactly what an insurance company would call a "first-class life." He accordingly proposed to the Egyptian Government that, in exchange for these annuities, they should pay him the very modest sum of £4,500,000 sterling. Now, he (Mr. Osborne Morgan) would do the right hon. and learned Gentleman the justice to say that he refused to lend himself to what Sir Evelyn Baring, in his despatch of February 14, had called "a preposterous claim;" but the claim which the right hon. and learned Gentleman did put forward was—if the Government would forgive him saying so—almost as preposterous. What he put forward was that Ismail Pasha and the members of his family should have their pensions, which were dependent, the House would understand, upon the will of the Khedive, commuted upon the basis of 20 years' purchase. That would give Ismail about £1,700,000. Then the right hon. and learned Gentleman contended that £500,000 should be paid in satisfaction of an annuity of £20,000 claimed by Ismail on the death of his mother, but the right to which was altogether disputed by the Khedive. He also claimed £150,000 in consideration of the standing crops as well as three palaces—and putting the various items together, the sum actually demanded came to something a little short of £2,500,000. That would show what was the cost of the transactions to the Egyptian Government—that unfortunate sponge which it seemed that every needy adventurer had only to squeeze in order to get out of it what he liked. Well, this claim was presented to the Egyptian Government, but, it was hardly necessary to say, was, according to Sir Evelyn Baring, by them declared to be quite inadmissible. The Egyptian Government, according to *The Times*, offered to commute the pensions at 12 years' purchase; but it appeared from the Papers just published that the Judge Advocate General got the amount raised to 14 years' purchase—that was to say, Ismail got for himself, his younger sons, and daughters, Domain lands valued at £1,210,000, to be selected by himself, his own proporationte share being £560,400, with the option to the Princes to take £180,000 in cash. But, whereas two-thirds of the lands of the younger Princes were to be entailed on the recipients and their heirs, in the case of Ismail one-half was to be at his own absolute disposal. In addition to that, the Egyptian Government was to pay £100,000 in cash for the growing crops—£50,000 to Ismail and the rest to his family. But that was not all. Three palaces, one on the Bosphorus and two in Cairo, with the plate and furniture they contained, the whole stated in *The Times* of March 10 to have been valued by Ismail himself at £550,000, were ceded to him. Now, let the House look at the cost of this transaction to the Egyptians. First, the lands to be ceded had to be cleared from mortgage, to the great advantage of the bondholders, who would be paid off at par. For that purpose a loan, as announced by the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs yesterday, must be raised, the cost of which to Egypt was put by *The Times* Correspondent at £1,400,000. Of course, there would be some nice little pickings to be got out of the loan; but these pickings would, unfortunately, not go into the pockets of the Egyptians. He could not enter more fully into the matter. He would leave that to his hon. Friend the Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere). Then there was the £100,000 cash, the three palaces, furniture, plate, &c. Talk of spoiling the Egyptians! But the most extraordinary thing was that Members of the House were now called upon, as in the case of Warren Hastings, to admire the moderation of the ex-Khedive and his advisers, and Sir Evelyn Baring actually went the length of saying that—

> "The great advantage of the present arrangement to the Egyptian Government is that it will relieve them from the necessity of administering Domain lands to the value of more than £1,000,000."

Why, a man who robbed another man of his estate might as well say that he relieved him of the necessity of keeping an agent. But Sir Evelyn Baring went on to say that the cession of three palaces was rather advantageous than otherwise to the Egyptian Government, because they cost so much to build; and then he wound up with a magnificent peroration about the ability, fairness, and moderation displayed by Sir Edgar Vincent and the right hon. and learned Gentleman. But he thought the House ought, in fairness, to hear the pæan pronounced over the right hon. and learned Gentleman by *The Times* Correspondent, who said—

> "The one man who never lost hope was Mr. Marriott. If he could not command success, he was determined to deserve it. It is a pity that professional etiquette should seal his lips as to the circumstances of a negotiation, the details of which would make an interesting chapter in legal history. What he does fully admit is the consummate ability with which Sir Edgar Vincent conducted the negotiations on behalf of the Egyptian Government, and the unvarying tact and good sense with which Sir Evelyn Baring played the part of 'honest broker.' It is not difficult to see why the arrangement has been accepted with equal satisfaction by all parties, or why Mr. Marriott should be blessed both in his outgoing from Cairo and in his incoming to Constantinople. Nor is it necessary to seek for any explanation of the effusive cordiality and goodwill which apparently prevailed between the recent disputants. It is sufficient to pray that it may last and survive the cash payments. If I were tempted to look ahead I should be inclined to prophesy that within a not remote period about £496,000 of the Domain lands will again be in the market, and that some years later a question will arise as to the probability of making some further provision for indigent descendants of Ismail. But 'sufficient unto the day is both the good and the evil thereof.'"

Poor Egyptians! They had not even now got rid of this Old Man of the Sea. But now let him read to the House a short paragraph from another newspaper, which he had reason to believe represented the opinion of a considerable number of persons in Egypt, and which gave a very different account of the impression left by the transaction. [A MINISTER: What paper?] It was from *The Egyptian Messenger*, and it said—

> "With or without reason, the Egyptian Government believed that Mr. Marriott was the mouthpiece of Lord Salisbury, and terms were offered which would never have been offered but for that. Ismail was told that in satisfaction of all claims, the Egyptian ~~Government~~ Government would commute his civil list at 12 years' purchase. But Mr. Marriott has driven a still better bargain. . . . Once more—let us hope for the last time—Ismail has spoiled the Egyptians; but it is not pleasant to remember that he has done so with the aid of the British Judge Advocate General, and presumably, therefore, with the concurrence of the British Government."

That impression might be right or wrong, but there it was and there it would remain. The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) might be able to show that his Colleague failed to obtain for his client his full pound of flesh, and that the terms which he obtained fell short of those which, by greater persistence in his advocacy, he might have exacted. If he did, it would not weaken his case. In these cases, they must look not only to what was actually done, but to the impression made on the popular mind. Meantime, he would not pay the Judge Advocate General the very bad compliment of suggesting that he did not do the very best he could for his client. He did not blame him for that—as an honest advocate he could do no less. But what he did blame him for was for doing that which no man had a right to do—for accepting an equivocal position, for going out to Egypt in a double capacity, and for using—it might be unintentionally, it might be even unconsciously—his position as a Minister of the Queen in order to further the pecuniary interest of his personal client. It was that action which he asked the House to condemn upon the three grounds stated in his Resolution. That it was without precedent, had been already admitted by the Leader of the House; that it had been and was liable to grave misconstruction, he hoped he had shown; that, if followed on future occasions, it would lead to serious complications, it would, he thought, be a waste of words to contend. In any case, he should wait with some interest to see whether in the course of this debate a single Member of this House, be he Conservative, Liberal, or Liberal Unionist, would rise in his place and declare that this whole transaction formed a fitting precedent for the conduct of any man who, by his position, was necessarily charged with the duty of maintaining the high interests of the British Empire and the spotless honour of the British Crown. The right hon. and learned Gentleman concluded by moving his Resolution.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House disapproves the acceptance by a Minister of the Crown, holding the office of Judge Advocate General, of the duties of professional advocate to the ex-Khedive Ismail in the prosecution of a hostile claim against the Egyptian Government, as contrary to Constitutional usage and precedent, as liable to serious misconstruction Abroad and at Home, and as calculated to introduce undesirable complications into our relations with Foreign and friendly countries,"—(*Mr. Osborne Morgan,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL (Mr. Marriott) (Brighton) said, that personally he had nothing to take exception to in the speech of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for East Denbighshire (Mr. Osborne Morgan). If the right hon. and learned Gentleman, however, had taken the course which ordinary men in his position might be expected to take, the House would probably not have been troubled with much that that speech contained. The right hon. and learned Gentleman belonged to the same Profession as he did—he was his Predecessor in the Office of Judge Advocate General—and he had had the honour of his acquaintance for something like 15 or 20 years; and most men in that position, before they proposed a Vote of censure, would have gone to the Minister against whom that Vote was directed and have asked for information with regard to the circumstances of the case. Since his return from Egypt, however, the right hon. and learned Gentleman had not addressed one word to him. He had seen the right hon. and learned Gentleman on the Front Bench opposite, and had noticed him now and then casting an eye upon him something like the eye that a boa constrictor in the Zoological Gardens casts on the rabbit he is about to devour That was all the communication they had had. However, he did not find fault with the right hon. and learned Gentleman for bringing forward this Motion; on the contrary, he thanked him with all sincerity, because, that Motion being founded on an entire delusion, the right hon. and learned Gentleman had afforded him an opportunity of stating to the House, and through the House to the country, the circumstances under which he acted for the ex-Khedive—Ismail Pasha—and of also stating what were the real facts of the settlement effected. The right hon. and learned Gentleman went into two matters. He first of all discussed the position of the Judge Advocate General, and certainly he greatly magnified the Office. That Office had been attacked on several occasions within the last few years. His right hon. and learned Friend was himself Judge Advocate General in 1885, when a Motion on the subject was brought forward by Colonel Alexander, and a great disinclination was then manifested on the part of the House to pay the salary of £2,000 a-year attached to the Office. It was illustrative of the strong Party feeling in the House that the attack came from the Conservative, and not the Radical Benches. The great advocate of economy, the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), who was now busily taking notes, did not say a word against the Office and the salary then, nor did a much regretted Member of the House —the late Mr. Peter Rylands, who was a most ardent economist, almost more rigid than the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill). The right hon. and learned Gentleman himself, however, took part in that debate. He made a long speech, at the end of which he said—

> "He thought he had shown that the Office of the Judge Advocate General was not a sinecure; but that it was one in which a vast amount of work was carried on."—(3 *Hansard* [297] 1883.)

And the impression conveyed to the House was that the right hon. and learned Gentleman himself, as Judge Advocate General, had a vast amount of work to do. He (Mr. Marriott) had made inquiries, and he found that the right hon. and learned Gentleman's attendance at the Office was excellent. He came down about 11 o'clock, or half-past 11 o'clock, and remained till 4 o'clock, when the House sat. But he had also made inquiries from which it appeared that there was in his time about the same amount of work that there was now, if anything rather less. He had not yet had an opportunity of giving evidence before the Committee on Civil Service Establishments; but he had offered to give evidence, and he might yet be called. He did not think he would be guilty of any breach of privilege if he explained that when he became Judge Advocate General in 1885 he found there a Deputy Judge Advocate General who was a lawyer, and two Deputy Judge Advocates General who were military men. The first received in all £1,000 a-year, and the two latter £700 a-year each. They were also there in the time of the right hon. and learned Gentleman. The work of the two Deputy Judge Advocates General amounted to two or three hours a-day, and of the other Deputy Judge Advocate General about an hour, or an hour and a half, and occasionally to two hours. He thought the Office was overmanned, and when a vacancy occurred in the Office of the military Judge Advocates General he declined to fill it up, and thus £700 a-year was saved. The work which had been done by three was now done by two, which gave them about four hours a day each, which, as Public Offices went, was a fair amount of work. The amount of work required of the Judge Advocate General was hardly ever more than one hour's work a day. When last year the Office was attacked he admitted at once that there was room for great economy, and, as a matter of fact, he placed his resignation in the hands of the Prime Minister, and explained that he had no desire to stand in the way of any change that might be considered desirable by the War Office. There were some curious coincidences in regard to the holding of this Office. He was first offered it in 1885, and soon afterwards the Ministry went out. He was again offered it in 1886, and he accepted it. The right hon. and learned Gentleman was first offered the Office in 1880, and he held it until 1885. The right hon. and learned Gentleman was offered that Office again in 1886, but he did not take it; he took instead what some might consider the inferior Office of Under Secretary for the Colonies. And why did the right hon. and learned Gentleman not then take the Office of Judge Advocate General? He (Mr. Marriott) took it because he had much greater faith in his constituents than the right hon. and learned Gentleman had in his. In consequence of the right hon. and learned Gentleman's not having taken the Office it was given to a very able lawyer at the Common Law Bar, who was the leader of his Circuit and had a large practice, and who, but for his political opinions, he should be glad to see again in that House. Mr. Mellor became Judge Advocate General in the Liberal Government. Now, by some coincidence, Mr. Mellor had written a letter which appeared in that very day's papers in regard to the Office of Judge Advocate General. In that letter Mr. Mellor said that some time ago the opinion of the Attorney and the Solicitor General was taken on that question as to the Judge Advocate General, and they were of opinion that the holder of that Office was not a Judge. The first proposition of the right hon. Gentleman was that the Judge Advocate General was a Judge, and his next that, being a Judge, he should not go to Egypt. The right hon. and learned Gentleman had protested against the Judge Advocate General practising. Now, when the Office was offered to him (Mr. Marriott) in 1885 by Lord Salisbury, he at once said that he could take it only on one condition. He was not in the happy position of the right hon. and learned Gentleman. He did not see the good of giving up his practice at the Bar for an Office which he might only hold for a few weeks or months. Well, Mr. Mellor became Judge Advocate General and Lord Herschell was Lord Chancellor, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) was Prime Minister. Mr. Mellor continued to practise at the Bar as he had done. [Mr. Osborne Morgan dissented.] The right hon. and learned Gentleman shook his head. He retired from his Circuit; but it often happened that when a gentleman at the Bar had got a large practice and some other gentleman wanted it, the moment he got an official position his comrades gave him a dinner, which was a sort of hint that he was not to come there again. But he had seen Mr. Mellor's name as practising in the Divorce Court and other Courts during and since the time when he was Judge Advocate General. The present Lord Chancellor, the late Lord Chancellor, the present Attorney and Solicitor General, and he presumed the late Attorney and Solicitor General also, were all in favour of the Judge Advocate General continuing to practise at the Bar; and, therefore, he (Mr. Marriott) did not think it presumptuous to put their combined authority against that of his right hon. and learned Friend opposite, although he happened to have been Judge Advocate General. Therefore it might, he thought, be taken for granted that the Judge Advocate General was allowed to practise at the Bar. Turning now to the Amendment moved by his right hon. and learned Friend, it said—

> "That this House disapproves the acceptance by a Minister of the Crown, holding the office of Judge Advocate General, of the duties of professional advocate to the ex-Khedive Ismail."

He (Mr. Marriott) presumed that by "advocate" his right hon. and learned Friend meant "counsel." Now, as a matter of fact, he did not as Judge Advocate General accept any retainer from the ex-Khedive. When he was made Judge Advocate General he was his counsel. His right hon. and learned Friend admitted that he had stipulated, when appointed Judge Advocate General, that he should carry on his private practice; and among his clients was that very terrible man Ismail Pasha. There was no stipulation that the ex-Khedive should be excluded from the number of his clients. There was no acceptance on his part as Judge Advocate General of the duties of professional advocate to the ex-Khedive, and therefore the Amendment of his right hon. and learned Friend was inaccurate as to the facts. Then the Amendment went on to say—

> "In the prosecution of a hostile claim against the Egyptian Government."

He presumed that his right hon. and learned Friend there referred to what he did when he went to Cairo both in October and at Christmas last. Now, he did not go to Egypt to prosecute a hostile claim against the Egyptian Government. As his right hon. and learned Friend had gone into the claim of Ismail Pasha, he was bound more or less to follow him, but he would do so as briefly as possible. It was in the month either of March or February, 1885, that he was first retained to act for the ex-Khedive. At that time he was not only not in Office, but there was no prospect of the Conservative Party coming into Office in that year. At that time what was this claim? In 1878 a certain loan was raised in Egypt called the Domain Loan. On that occasion not only the Khedive Ismail but all the members of his family gave up every inch of land that belonged to them in Egypt. They gave up something over 450,000 acres of land for the security of that loan. They gave it up of their own free will, and the loan of £8,500,000 was raised on that property. In return for that a sum was to be allocated for the Khedive Ismail's family The sum fixed upon was £360,000 a-year. A certain amount of that sum was to be paid to the reigning Khedive and certain other amounts were to be paid to the different members of the family. At the same time a document was given to each of the members of the family, and he would invite the attention of the House to the words of that document, the date of which was October, 1878. The words were—

> "Each of those members is to receive during his or her life a pension which shall be appropriated to him or her; and after his or her death this pension will continue to be paid to his or her family, children, and grandchildren,"

and so on, for ever. That land was given up; Egypt had the benefit of it, and also the loan; and in return for that sacrifice every member of the family was told that, whatever was his or her pension, they should enjoy it, and after their death their children, grandchildren, and their descendants for ever should enjoy it also. It was what he had no doubt the hon. Member for Northampton would object to—a perpetual pension so long as there was a lineal descendant left. On the 24th of June, 1879, some nine months after the document that he had quoted was promulgated, Ismail Pasha ceased to be Khedive of Egypt. On the 1st of July a Decree was promulgated which gave certain moneys out of this £360,000 to him, to the reigning Khedive £80,000 a-year, to the three Princesses £36,000 a-year, and other sums to other people. The words of the Decree were—

> "To be paid per annum, and which will be paid to you regularly by the Government, and will be transmitted in ordinary succession to your children and grandchildren and descendants for ever."

When that Decree was promulgated Ismail was not on the throne, and yet the Council in their decree used the very same words that were used in the document promulgated when the land was given up in 1878. In 1880 the Law of Liquidation was passed. That law, no doubt, made very great changes, but the first charge of £360,000 was not altered in the least, and it had been decided over and over again by the Law Officers that none of that money could go to the State, as it had been set aside under an international guarantee for the members of the Khedivial family. But in 1880 the allowances paid to the Khedivial house were reduced. Instead of £50,000 only £40,000 was allowed, and the £36,000 for the Princesses was wiped out. Therefore, in 1880 and the following years, Ismail Pasha received £46,000 less than the sum allowed him by the Council. The action which he brought in 1883 was to recover the accumulated difference between the allowances granted in 1880 and those decreed in 1879. The action also had reference to the palaces, which had been confiscated and their contents, and to the money which had been spent by him and his family on the seed which had been handed over to the State in 1878. The case was supported by the opinions of the present Lord Chancellor (Lord Halsbury) and of the late Attorney General—the hon. and learned Member for South Hackney (Sir Charles Russell)—who both advised that the claims were well founded. These were the claims which were put before him (Mr. Marriott) in March, 1885, when he advised that, whatever were the legal rights of Ismail Pasha, it would be absolutely impossible to get the money from the Egyptian Government, and that the revenues of Egypt could not bear any extra burden. The advice was taken; but in 1886 an incident occurred which revived the old claims to a certain extent. Among the sums allocated was one of £20,000 a-year to the Grand Princess, the mother of Ismail Pasha, and when she died this sum ought to have gone to him. It was, however, distributed among the different members of his family by the present Khedive, the contention of the advisers of the present Khedive being that he had an absolute right to dispose of the £360,000 which had been appropriated to the Khedivial family. This advice placed Ismail Pasha and every member of his family absolutely at the mercy of the present Khedive in respect of pecuniary matters. The question was submitted to him, and he advised that three arbitrators should be appointed—Lord Selborne, Lord Bramwell, and Lord Herschell; and Ismail Pasha pledged himself to pay the costs of the arbitration and to abide by the result. Correspondence was carried on for some time, and in August last the Egyptian Government decided that it would not do to have an arbitration presided over by an English Judge. He then saw his client, who asked whether he would conduct the case in the Egyptian Courts—the mixed Courts—and he declined absolutely. The fact that he (Mr. Marriot) held the post of Judge Advocate General at the time influenced him in some degree to refuse, but he also took into consideration the fact that the only languages spoken in the Courts were French and Italian, and that his accent in expressing himself in those languages might be disadvantageous to the interests of his client. He might say, in passing, that the ex-Khedive expressed his horror at the prospect of seeing the whole family disputing in a Court of Law as to the distribution of a sum which it was admitted belonged to them. His right hon. and learned Friend had charged the Prime Minister with knowledge of his visit to Egypt, but he could assure the right hon. and learned Gentleman that the Prime Minister (the Marquess of Salisbury) certainly did not know that he was going to that country, and he did not believe that any Member of the Ministry knew it. He certainly did not ask the permission of the Prime Minister. Having informed the ex-Khedive that he would not act as his counsel, he offered to represent him as agent or arbitrator on the understanding that his appointment would be acceptable to all the members of the family. After Parliament had risen in September he travelled to Italy and Greece, and then to Egypt. This case had been going on more or less for five years, and he was told that those who were concerned would be only too glad of a settlement. He was asked to stay then, but he could not. He only took his allotted holiday, and he was back in London in November. Up to the 22nd of December he was within call every day at his Office in Great George Street to transact the very important business to which the right hon. and learned Gentleman opposite had referred. He did not know what the practice was on the other side of the House; whether right hon Gentlemen there—when they were in Office—asked leave of the Prime Minister to go abroad, but on his side they did not, because they had more freedom and had that faith in the Prime Minister which the Prime Minister had in them. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian shook his head, and he was glad to see that the custom was the same on the other side of the House. The right hon. and learned Gentleman said that he went out, not as Mr. Marriott, but as Judge Advocate General, and he asked what could awe the people of Egypt more than those three terrible words when they heard them. This was the whole basis of the charge of the right hon. and learned Gentleman, that the Egyptians were frightened, not at the name of the Judge Advocate General, but at the three names combined. He had no doubt that if the right hon. and learned Gentleman had gone out himself he would have awed them. As a matter of fact the name had not the slightest effect. He only saw two individuals in this case, and they were Sir Evelyn Baring and Sir Edgar Vincent. Sir Evelyn Baring was a genuine Liberal, but he was a man of such strength of will that nobody—not even the Judge Advocate General—could awe him. Then, with regard to Sir Edgar Vincent. He had known many Chancellors of the Exchequer and many Secretaries of the Treasury, and he was aware how difficult it was to screw a farthing or a halfpenny out of them for anything; but he knew of no Chancellor of the Exchequer who was so firm in this direction as Sir Edgar Vincent. That gentleman had been a perfect guardian of the finances of Egypt, and he would only ask the House to look at the finances of Egypt when Sir Edgar Vincent went to that country and then to consider what they were now. Sir Edgar Vincent was an Egyptian Minister, and he had been a most careful Chancellor of the Exchequer. No Egyptian could have guarded the Egyptian finances better than he had done. Those were the two gentlemen whom he had to overawe. He might have tried, but he was sure that he did not succeed, and he did not think that he tried. It was true that he asked for 20 years' purchase; and the right hon. and learned Gentleman—if he had good ground rents in the City or a property which he thought was his own and which descended to his children—would, no doubt, have asked 25 years' purchase. That would have been the period in an ordinary compensation case; but there were reasons why 20 or 40 or 60 years' were not given. They were obliged to be content with 14 years, and the loan was fixed, not at 5 per cent, but at 4½ per cent, by the Egyptian Government, showing how good the security was. The arrangement made was the best which he with his feeble powers could bring about. He acted for the best and not against the Egyptian Government, and he quoted the evidence of the parties who were really interested as against that of the right hon. and learned Gentleman. The Khedive himself, in his own name and in the name of all the members of his family, thanked him (Mr. Marriott) for having made an arrangement which prevented them from appearing as a public spectacle in the Law Courts. Ismail Pasha also gave him his thanks in an equally warm and hearty manner. He valued those thanks because they came from the parties who knew the circumstances, and he thought it would be seen that the Amendment was founded absolutely on a misconception of the facts.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said, he thought that the best proof that the right hon. and learned Gentleman was wrong in going out to Egypt in any kind of capacity was the speech he had just made from the Front Bench as a Minister of the Crown. That speech had shown that he went there absolutely as the professional advocate of Ismail Pasha. It was a scandal that the Judge Advocate General should have undertaken this business. He did not think that it was necessary to follow the right hon. and learned Gentleman into the discussion of the duties of the Judge Advocate General. He would simply state that he moved a reduction of the salary attached to the Office when he discovered how little the holder of the Office did for the money. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the present Judge Advocate proposed that the Office of Deputy Judge Advocate General, of the value of £700 a-year, should be abolished, but that he himself should keep his salary of £2,000. Then the right hon. and learned Gentleman said, that, after the debate on this matter, he offered his resignation to Lord Salisbury. Were they to be humbugged by these offers of resignation which were never accepted? If the right hon. and learned Gentleman felt that he was occupying a sinecure, as was shown by the Committee presided over by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), and had no right to the £2,000, he should not merely have offered his resignation but should have insisted upon Lord Salisbury accepting it. He looked upon the Judge Advocate General as a sort of odd man in the Government who was sent to address meetings, and he fancied that that was how the right hon. and learned Gentleman thought he was earning his salary. In his opinion, the blame for allowing the right hon. and learned Gentleman to go to Egypt and the blame for not accepting his resignation should rest upon Lord Salisbury. He presumed that the right hon. and learned Gentleman received a fee not for acting as arbitrator but for taking the side of the Khedive. Would the right hon. Gentleman say that he did not receive the fee after he was Judge Advocate? The right hon. and learned Gentleman said, he did not accept a retainer from the ex-Khedive after he was Judge Advocate General. But he did not receive a fee from the ex-Khedive after he accepted the Office? [*Cries of* "No!"] Let the right hon. and learned Gentleman deny it.

Mr. MARRIOTT said, the question of fees was a serious matter, but as a matter of fact he did not accept the retainer while he held the Office of Judge Advocate General; he had accepted it long before.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, that they who were not lawyers considered that they had not got a fee until they had it in their pockets. The right hon. and learned Gentleman was playing on the difference between a general retainer and a particular fee. Practically, however, the right hon. and learned Gentleman admitted that while he had the retainer before he accepted Office he received a special fee for a particular service rendered while he was Judge Advocate General. Whether the claim upon the Egyptian Government was hostile or not depended upon its character. So far from the annuities being perpetual and hereditary, Sir Evelyn Baring spoke of them as allowances of a temporary character; and the assumption that there could be no reduction of them was disposed of by the fact that they had been twice reduced already; while a further renunciation, such as had been made by the present Khedive, would have meant a great saving to the Egyptian Exchequer. The sum of £1,400,000 would not be borrowed at 4½ per cent; it would have to be raised at 5 or 5½ per cent; for this was not a preferential loan, nor was it a loan with a special hypothecation, and in all probability it would cost 6 per cent. That would be £84,000 per annum; but even at less than that it was an exceedingly bad bargain. Fresh burdens had been imposed upon the Egyptian taxpayers this year; they were no longer allowed to cultivate tobacco without paying a heavy tax; and this tax raised an additional £100,000. The last despatch of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff told us that the burdens on the Egpytian people were excessive, and that there would never be peace and quiet in the country until those burdens were reduced. Far from making this heavy perpetual charge on the country we ought to have reduced the heavy charges for the Khedivial family. The right hon. and learned Gentleman talked about the ex-Khedive's 480,000 acres which he had given up; but they were simply stolen from the Egyptian people, and Ismail was going to receive £1,400,000 as an allowance for giving up this stolen property, and a debtor and creditor account between the Khedive and the Egyptian people would show a balance in their favour. But apart from all these questions, he protested against the right hon. and learned Gentleman going out as a paid advocate. It was known that he was a Member of the British Administration, and that if he insisted upon the Egyptian people being bled they would be bled. The right hon. and learned Gentleman said he did not see an Egyptian Minister. Precisely, and that was what was complained of. He saw Sir Evelyn Baring and Sir E. Vincent; and they arranged between them this little plan of taking from the Egyptian people the sum of £1,400,000. It was a scandal that the right hon. and learned Gentleman should have gone out for such a purpose. Lord Salisbury must have known it; but certainly if he did not know it at the time, he ought since to have instructed the right hon. and learned Gentleman, instead of coming to the House of Commons to brag of the part he had played in Egypt, to humbly apologize for what he had done, so that it might be understood that no Judge Advocate General or Minister of the Crown would ever make such a gross mistake again.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.) said, he did not wish to enter into the personal questions raised in this debate; but the House would probably think that something should be said on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, and especially of the Foreign Office, which was largely concerned in the affairs of Egypt. First, with regard to the Papers, some copies of which had been that day placed in the Library, it had been said it was unfair to keep back the correspondence from the introducer of such a Motion as this. Undoubtedly, had a Notice been given touching the character and merits of the settlement which had been arrived at on the ex-Khedive's claim, the complaints made would have been pertinent; but it never occurred to him that they were pertinent to the Motion of which Notice had been given, which had exclusive reference to the acceptance by a Minister of the Crown of duties of a professional character. The Motion was indirectly a censure upon Her Majesty's Government for allowing him to do so; and there was no hint of any intention to discuss the character of the settlement. There had been no withholding of Papers, and the last despatches that had been published had not been long received. The point to which he would first ask attention was the position of the Judge Advocate General in this matter as it affected Her Majesty's Government. It had been stated that he retained his liberty to practise, and that this liberty was enjoyed by his immediate Predecessor. It was hardly necessary for the House to consider the convenience of that arrangement; it had not been stated that the public interests had suffered from the enjoyment of this liberty by the right hon. and learned Gentleman or his Predecessors. The circumstances of the present case were unique. Such a thing had certainly never happened before, and in all probability it would never happen again. Before his right hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Marriott) took Office, he held a commission on the part of the ex-Khedive Ismail. Her Majesty's Government had altogether declined to enter into any controversy arising out of the claims of the ex-Khedive against the Government of Egypt, which had, fortunately, very competent advisers, and the arrangement which had been come to had been a very successful one. It must be recollected that the claims of the ex-Khedive concerned other countries besides ourselves, and that many delicate and dangerous points might have arisen if those claims had been allowed to come into court, or before a mixed tribunal. The terms which were agreed upon had not imposed any fresh burden upon Egypt. He had prepared a short table which he believed would make the terms agreed upon intelligible to the House. He was aware that the claims of the ex-Khedive were manifestly excessive; but at the same time there was some foundation for them. The original claim for the value of crops on the Domain lands when given up was £364,000, in respect of which £100,000 had been allowed. For arrears of allowances, £1,050,000 had been claimed, in respect of which nothing had been allowed. For palaces and lands adjoining them, £3,030,000 had been claimed, in respect of which one palace with its precincts at Constantinople and two palaces in Egypt without the adjoining lands had been allowed. With respect to the latter, he might observe that the cost of maintaining these palaces exceeded their actual value. The result of the arrangement was that £4,500,000 of claims had been extinguished by the payment of £100,000 and the cession of three palaces which were worthless to the Egyptian Government. In addition to this the ex-Khedive and certain members of his family enjoyed yearly allowances to the amount of about £300,000. Of this sum necessarily paid to the ex-Khedive and the Princes and Princesses concerned, £86,500 had been capitalized and commuted into a grant of Domain lands at a probable future cost to the Egyptian Government of from £65,000 to £70,000 per annum, thus effecting a yearly saving of from between £15,000 to £20,000. It would be seen from these figures that there need be no fear that any increased taxation would be thrown upon Egypt in respect of the arrangement that had been entered into. As to the propriety of the arrangement having been brought about by the Judge Advocate General, that was a matter of opinion; but he thought that the House would think that in the circumstances of the case the right hon. and learned Gentleman was justified in the course which he had taken. The course which had been pursued was, under the circumstances,

exceptional, and he might admit that *primâ facie* it was not desirable. That the results had been eminently successful, he thought, could not be denied. It was due to his right hon. and learned Friend to say that in his conduct of the affair he had advantages which probably no other gentleman would have had. [*Ironical Opposition Cheers*]. Hon. Members were pleased to think that that was ambiguous—[*Cries of* "Not at all!"]—but it might be taken in this way, that he was able to give advice to his client which would be accepted as that of hardly any other man would not have been. He did not think it was any imputation upon the right hon. and learned Gentleman if his professional standing and good advice induced the ex-Khedive to accept terms which were favourable to Egypt and reasonable in themselves, and calculated to avoid the evils which a dangerous and protracted litigation might produce; and this being so, he thought he might leave the case in the hands of the House.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.) said, there could not be a doubt in the mind of any hon. Member that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Judge Advocate General (Mr. Marriott) was in a much better position to give advice than anybody else who went out on behalf of the ex-Khedive. The right hon. and learned Gentleman was not only in a position to give advice to his client in the sense the right hon. Baronet (Sir James Fergusson) had just mentioned, but he was in a position to give advice to the Government of Egypt which no other official personage would have been able to give. What was the main fact connected with this transaction, and which nobody in the course of the debate had attempted to explain away or deny? It was that these claims had been pressed upon the Egyptian Government through five long years, and that the ex-Khedive, Ismail Pasha, had not succeeded in getting a single shilling from the Government of Egypt until a Member of the present Conservative Ministry went out to Egypt. It was then that a ransom of £1,400,000 was paid by the people of Egypt, a ransom which even the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) admits that *primâ facie* it would be desirable they were not obliged to pay. Any person who took the trouble to follow the Papers relating to Egyptian affairs would bear him out when he said that this was not a proper claim, that it was not a just claim, and that it was not a legal claim against the people of Egypt, and that the reason why, after five years' fruitless endeavour, the ex-Khedive had eagerly grasped at one-fifth of his demand was the reason stated by Sir Evelyn Baring in the Memorandum which they had dragged out of the Government to-day—namely, that the best legal authorities had advised the Egyptian Government that there was not the remotest danger of any tribunal in Egypt giving a judgment against the Government. When the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Judge Advocate General wasted the time of the House by treating it with what seemed to him (Mr. Dillon) to be very unseemly and unsuitable jokes about the Judge Advocate General impressing and browbeating the people of Egypt, he did not in the least improve his position, but, on the contrary, made his position in the face of the House and the country very much worse. The right hon. and learned Gentleman said he went out to Egypt not as the counsel of the ex-Khedive, but as his agent—agent was the word used. They had, therefore, this condition of things, and no amount of argument, however plausible, would displace it from the minds of the people of England, that here was a claim enforced by every kind of pressure against the Government of Egypt for five years, here was a claim which during those five years the ex-Khedive and his counsel never dared to bring into the Courts of Egypt, because the counsel could not speak Italian or French. He thought there was probably some other reason besides his want of knowledge of the French and Italian languages, which induced the right hon. and learned Gentleman to advise his client to hesitate before bringing his claim before a Court of Law. The fact could not be displaced from the minds of the people of England that the claimant dare not bring his claim before the Courts of Law, that for five years he was unsuccessful in enforcing it, and that he was given £1,400,000; but not until he had succeeded in paying a Minister of the Crown of England to act as his agent in Egypt. The right hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Marriott) did not attempt to deny that he took a large fee for his pains. No one in this country knew how large the fee was. While the right hon. and learned Gentleman was receiving £2,000 a-year from the taxpayers of Great Britain, he took a large fee for acting as the agent, not the counsel, of a foreign Prince, and for enforcing the claims of that Prince upon the people of Egypt, and enforcing them successfully. The right hon. and learned Gentleman seemed to be in a very jocose and frank humour. It would be very interesting, and certainly germane to the subject, if he took the people of England into his confidence as to the exact amount of his fee. The right hon. Baronet the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) who spoke on behalf of the Government, said that the Government had always scrupulously abstained from interfering in this matter, or from interfering with Egyptian finance at all. Such a statement might pass muster with hon. Members who took no interest in Egyptian affairs, but it certainly would not with those who took the trouble to read the Egyptian papers. He was perfectly astounded at the courage of the right hon. Baronet in making such a statement. He asserted that in the face of the Papers laid before the House he was entitled to say, in reply to the right hon. Baronet, that no single move was made in Egyptian finance that was not laid before the Foreign Office in London, and approved or disapproved of by that Department. The English Government had planted in Egypt Sir Evelyn Baring, who overrode the Egyptian Ministry on every occasion on which his judgment went contrary to theirs, and who was responsible to the English Foreign Office. An attempt had been made to persuade Members of the House of Commons that this arrangement was a good arrangement for the people of Egypt. He regretted exceedingly that the time given for the discussion of these complicated affairs of Egyptian finance was so short that it was absolutely impossible for anyone to bring the matter with fulness before the House. As the time allowed to them was so short he would as briefly as he possibly could endeavour to let hon. Members understand that not only had this claim, which he believed was a bogus and unjust and illegal claim, been enforced through the agency of a Minister of the Crown, but that it was a claim which would weigh heavily upon the people of Egypt; that so far from the arrangement being a gain to the people it was a great loss, and that in two ways. The figures were so jumbled up in the Despatches that it required a considerable degree of care to understand how the problem was worked out; but he understood that at the present moment the family of the Khedive, Tewfik Pasha, had a Civil List of £300,000, out of which he allowed £86,000 to the ex-Khedive, Ismail Pasha, and that the payment of that £86,000 he could, according to the best authorities, stop any moment; but such was the law of Egypt that he could not, supposing he stopped it, surrender the money for the Civil uses of the Government of Egypt; it must remain part of the Civil List of himself and family. As he (Mr. Dillon) understood the operation of the arrangement under consideration, the claim of Ismail Pasha was to be bought off by a present to him of £1,210,000 worth of the lands of the Domain, and by an additional grant to him of £100,000 in regard to property on his lands when he surrendered his estates. This £1,310,000 would have to come from the Domain lands, and a loan would have to be raised in order to redeem from the loan which now covered it that portion of the Domain which was to be given to Ismail Pasha. What would be the result? They would have this fresh burden thrown on the Government of Egypt. They would set free £65,000 of the Civil List, but it would not be available for civil government, but would be hypothecated and kept by the law on the Civil List of the present Khedive. Therefore, he could not see at all how it could be shown that the whole of this burden would not fall on the unfortunate taxpayers of Egypt, and that the whole of the interest on the loan which would have to be raised would not have to be put on the shoulders of the taxpayers in the shape of extra taxation. He objected to this arrangement because it would be made the pretext and excuse for raising another Egyptian loan, and they had noticed that whenever there was to be a loan raised in Egypt they were told that the finances of Egypt were in a most flourishing condition. The next thing they heard, after receiving such an assurance, was that £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 was going to be raised on loan. Would hon. Members notice this fact, that the whole of the operation of redeeming the claim of the ex-Khedive was covered by £1,310,000. He saw it stated in *The Times* newspaper that the amount of the new loan was fixed at £2,400,000. What was the balance between that sum and £1,310,000 to be devoted to? Yesterday, he asked the right hon. Baronet the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) whether the House would have an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon the loan before it was issued, and the reply he got was that the issue of the loan was no business of Her Majesty's Government. He should like to know whether Sir Evelyn Baring would not be consulted before the loan was issued? He objected to this transaction for three reasons; firstly, because a Minister of the Crown had been paid by the ex-Khedive to procure for him the admission of a claim which he utterly failed to procure through the means of any other agent; secondly, that the admission of that claim would throw an additional burden on already overburdened taxpayers of Egypt; and, thirdly, because the arrangement had been made the excuse for the raising of another Egyptian loan. They never yet heard of an Egyptian loan which did not swell in the hands of the operators. As soon as there was a question of a loan, every department of the administration in that country discovered that there were small arrears and little sums left over from past years which required to be met, and the consequence was that a larger loan than originally contemplated was raised. He maintained that this operation was iniquitous, both in its inception and in the way it was carried out. It would increase the burdens upon the taxpayers of Egypt, and at a time when they were told that Egyptian finances were in a condition of thorough soundness it gave an excuse for another resort to the miserable system of borrowing money.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight) said, he should hardly have intervened in the debate but for the extraordinary observations of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon). A more mistaken idea of either the original or the present position of the matter could not possibly be conceived. In the most emphatic language the hon. Member declared this to be an entirely bogus claim of the ex-Khedive, and that he never was able to exact one penny of it until he had obtained a paid agent from the Government. If these were the sentiments of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite, he should hope some hon. Member who had been responsible for the government of Egypt would endorse them. So far from this being a bogus claim, as a matter of fact, the ex-Khedive and the members of his family were receiving £112,000 per annum out of a total sum of £300,000 called the Civil List. Nobody had ever suggested that any part of that £300,000 could go to the taxpayers of Egypt, or could go otherwise than to the family of either Ismail or Tewfik. His right hon. and learned Friend the Judge Advocate General had quoted the opinion of the hon. and learned Member for Hackney (Sir Charles Russell) and the present Lord Chancellor when at the Bar, to the effect that there was no doubt that that £300,000 was solely a charge applicable to the members of the Khedivial family, and therefore the position was this—whatever might be the merits of the case—that Ismail Pasha and the members of the Khedivial family were in receipt of £112,000 per annum. So far from its being a bogus claim, right hon. Gentlemen opposite knew perfectly well that to their knowledge that money was being paid. About the beginning or some time in the year 1887 the mother died, and there arose the question of £20,000 beyond the £112,000, and the claim then made was this. The ex-Khedive said—

> "According to my rights, that £20,000 should come to me, not as a mere distribution of the £112,000, but in addition to the £112,000;"

but Tewfik said he had a right to decide to whom that £20,000 should go. It was true that there had been reductions in the actual amount paid to Ismail Pasha, but those reductions had afforded no saving whatever to the Egyptian people. He wanted to know what was the good of the hon. Member for East Mayo talking about this as a bogus claim. This £40,000 had been regularly paid, and the Egyptian Government would only have been able to say that somebody other than Ismail Pasha was entitled to receive it.

Mr. DILLON explained that the bogus claim he spoke of was the claim of the civil Government of Egypt to redeem a payment which had been made by Tewfik Pasha of his own free will.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER said, nobody had ever suggested that Ismail Pasha had not a claim upon this fund. The only question was between him and Tewfik and other members of the family as to whether he should receive a larger payment than he had received in the past. So far from it being possible to suggest that this bargain was a bad one, the result showed that there was a saving of £20,000 or £30,000 a-year to Egyptian finance by reason of this arrangement which had been made. If the hon. Member for East Mayo would read the Papers he would find that, whereas there had been previously a total payment of £300,000 per annum to Tewfik and to the other members of the Khedivial family, out of which £112,000 went to Ismail Pasha and the members of the family other than Tewfik, this settlement relieved the £300,000 from the payment of £86,000 per annum. The position was this—that the £300,000 was practically reduced to £200,000, and that the benefit would ultimately come to the Egyptian taxpayer. For 14 years' purchase a perpetual annuity of £86,000 had been redeemed. It was true that the hon. Member for East Mayo drew a distinction between the capitalized value of this and the annual payment, but for the purposes of the Egyptian revenue that made no difference. In a very few years there would be a relief in aid of the taxes of Egypt. He thought he was justified in pointing out how little this matter had to do with the Vote of Censure which had been brought forward by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Denbighshire (Mr. Osborne Morgan). He agreed with the Judge Advocate General that before a member of his own profession made such a charge he might have had the common fairness to ascertain what the real facts were. To the speeches of the Members for Northampton and East Mayo it was necessary for the Government to reply in order that the misleading statements in regard to the settlement might not be allowed to go uncontradicted. He did not suppose that anybody on the Front Opposition Bench or in any part of the House would suggest that his right hon. and learned Friend the Judge Advocate General had not stated truthfully the position of the matter. Speaking as the holder of the Office which he had the honour to fill, he was as jealous as anybody could be of the principle that nobody who had to advise Her Majesty's Government or who represented Her Majesty's Government, should appear in the position of an advocate for anybody who was supposed to be acting against Her Majesty's Government. After the House had heard the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman the Judge Advocate General, which had been known to many of them, and which might have been known to the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Denbighshire, if he had thought fit to make inquiries, what was the position? It was quite clear that Ismail Pasha had made very extravagant claims; it was quite clear, and it was not disputed on the other side of the House, that before 1886 Ismail Pasha had availed himself of the advice of the Judge Advocate General with regard to these claims. It was not true that Sir Evelyn Baring had ever said that there was no chance of such claims being enforced. What Sir Evelyn Baring had said was—

> "If he obtained a decision in favour of his claims—a result of which the highest legal authorities declare that there is no danger, but which, in the proverbial uncertainty of legal matters, must be taken into consideration—a complete financial breakdown must inevitably ensue."

The hon. Member for East Mayo had not completed the quotation. It must be remembered that they were not dealing with the arbitration of Lord Herschell, Lord Bramwell, or Lord Selborne, which Ismail Pasha was prepared to accept but which the Egyptian Government were not prepared to accept; they were dealing with mixed tribunals, and would any one in that House have the courage to say that there was certainty as to the result of these claims? He did not think that anyone who had any experience of Egyptian affairs would suggest that for a moment. The claim for £5,000,000 was an extravagant claim; but having regard to the fact that the share which Ismail Pasha and his relatives would get out of the £300,000 amounted to £112,000, nobody could seriously suggest that 14 years' purchase was not a most advantageous settlement for the people who had to pay. But there was another matter. It had been suggested that when a gentleman filling the position of Judge Advocate General, whose duties were not directly or indirectly connected with Egypt, who knew no more about Egypt than any other Member of the House of Commons or of Her Majesty's Government, but who happened to be able to have influence over Ismail Pasha, was allowed to advise him in connection with the question of what was a just settlement of his claim, that was some breach of his duty as Judge Advocate General. For his own part, he asserted that not only had there been nothing inconsistent with the position of the right hon. and learned Gentleman, but that it was right and proper that he should continue to advise Ismail Pasha as to the settlement he could fairly make. But there was another position to be considered—one of the alternatives of this dispute, which was not denied by any one on those Benches. The arbitration of Lord Herschell, Lord Selborne, and Lord Bramwell had been offered by Ismail Pasha. Did any one suggest that, presuming that that arbitration had been held, and had taken place in this country, there would have been anything inconsistent in the Judge Advocate General then appearing as counsel for Ismail Pasha because the question was a claim against the Egyptian Government? He was certain that any right hon. Gentleman opposite who was prepared to approve the Egyptian Government submitting to that arbibration would have been only too glad to know that Ismail Pasha's claims were to be represented and urged by a leading member of the Bar, though he was Judge Advocate General. The position of things was this—the right hon. and learned Gentleman had previously advised Ismail Pasha; claims were being made, and it was little wonder that the Egyptian Government were only too glad to know that Ismail Pasha's claims were to be adjusted by a man of prudence and position, and that there would be none of the ordinary incidents of the conduct of litigation in the mixed tribunals, with all its risks and uncertainties. This Motion had been urged upon the ground that some utterly improper position had been assumed by the Judge Advocate General with the knowledge of Her Majesty's Government; and it had been suggested, without a shadow of foundation, that the position of Judge Advocate General had been allowed to be made use of for the purpose of advocating the claims of Ismail Pasha. Those suggestions were made without one fact to substantiate them. Whether or not it had been a prudent thing for the right hon. and learned Gentleman to engage in this matter, from his own personal point of view was another matter; but that he was thoroughly justified in continuing to advise Ismail Pasha—whose adviser he had been long before he had been in Office—as to what was a fair settlement with the Egyptian Government, he thought nobody could deny. That settlement had resulted in a *boná fide* gain to the Egyptian people. Nothing could alter this fact—that a claim of £86,000 in perpetuity had been reduced to 14 years' purchase. He asked the House, as this Motion was a direct Vote of Censure, to come to the conclusion that, whether with reference to the conduct of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Judge Advocate General, or with regard to anything which had been referred to, nothing had been done directly or indirectly on behalf of Her Majesty's Government which they had the least cause to be ashamed of or to withdraw.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) said, the Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) seemed to have made the case, from the point of view of the Government, a great deal worse than it was before he spoke. The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson), with that diplomatic fact and experience which he was known to possess, felt he had a bad case, and desired to apologize for the conduct of the Government on the ground that the circumstances were very exceptional and peculiar. The right hon. Baronet said the circumstances were unique and would not occur again. If the Government had chosen to leave the matter there the House might perhaps have asked the Government to have given them an explicit assurance that they would never so act again, and they might have been satisfied with such an assurance. But the Attorney-General, as if he were arguing a case before a common jury, must needs try to brazen the matter out and endeavour to justify the conduct of the Government and of the Judge Advocate General. The Attorney General said that no one would deny that the Judge Advocate General was perfectly justified in advising Ismail Pasha. They did deny it on the Opposition side of the House. They denied it because the position the right hon. Gentleman occupied towards Ismail Pasha was absolutely incompatible with the position he occupied as a Minister of the Crown. The Attorney General spoke of the merits of the settlement; but that was not the question before the House, and he (Mr. Bryce) did not intend to debate it. The Motion of his right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Denbighshire (Mr. Osborne Morgan) was—

> "That this House disapproves the acceptance by a Minister of the Crown holding the Office of Judge Advocate General, of the duties of professional advocate to the ex-Khedive Ismail in the prosecution of a hostile claim against the Egyptian Government as contrary to Constitutional usage and precedent, as liable to serious misconstruction Abroad and at Home, and as calculated to introduce undesirable complications into our relations with foreign and friendly countries."

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: The hon. Gentleman did not hear the speech of the right hon. and learned Member for Denbighshire (Mr. Osborne Morgan).

MR. BRYCE said, he was present and heard the whole of the right hon. and learned Gentleman's speech. He had been present during the whole of the debate, and he thought that when the Attorney General rose he would have felt it his duty to address himself directly to the terms of the Resolution before the House. He (Mr. Bryce) asked the House to consider whether the phrases in the Motion were borne out. He maintained that the action of the Judge Advocate General was contrary to Constitutional usage. No precedent for it had been cited. They had challenged the Government to point to any case like it, but the Government had been unable to do so. No case like it could be quoted. It was a strong thing for a Member of the Government to undertake any work whatever except the work he undertook to do for Her Majesty. There was an exception made in the case of the Attorney General and of the Solicitor General, and the Judge Advocate General had tried to ride off, and so had the Attorney General, by calling this a case of practice. It was not a case of practice. When a Law Officer was allowed to retain his practice he was allowed to appear before the Courts of his own country. But what had the Judge Advocate General done? He had gone out, not as the counsel—the Judge Advocate General admitted that he did not go as counsel—but as the confidential paid agent or Attorney of the ex-Khedive Ismail, receiving a fee, the amount of which he had not stated, but which, from his silence, they knew must have been a very large one. It was an exceptional thing that a Member of the Government should undertake practice. It certainly was an unheard-of thing for a Member of the Government to undertake legal business against a foreign Power. He would like to be told of any case whatever in which a Member of Her Majesty's Government had been allowed to practice in the Courts of a foreign country, still more to practice in Courts of a foreign country against the Government of that country. But the case went further than that. The Judge Advocate General had not merely acted against a foreign Government, but against a foreign Government which was practically dependent upon our Government — against the Government of a country whose territory we were occupying and which we were advising, and which took no important step of any kind without the consent of Her Majesty's Government. He could not conceive any case in which it was more desirable to scrupulously guard against any action of this kind than the present case. Now the motion of his right hon. and learned Friend went on to say that the action of the Judge Advocate General was "liable to serious misconstruction Abroad and at Home." Had the Government denied that? He (Mr. Bryce) happened to be in Cairo at the time the news of the Judge Advocate General's coming arrived, and he remembered the universal feeling of surprise and astonishment among official Egyptians and the upper classes in Cairo generally with which the announcement of the right hon. Gentleman's mission was regarded. There was no secret about the matter at all. If any Member of the House referred to the telegrams of *The Times'* correspondent, which appeared in the *The Times* of the 5th of January, and which represented the first impressions of the matter on the part of the Egyptians, he would see that his (Mr. Bryce's) words were fully borne out. He himself was asked with amazement by Ministers in Egypt whether it was true that a Member of Her Majesty's Government was coming out to prosecute this claim against them. He had no doubt in the world that the Judge Advocate General, when he came out, made it his business to explain that he was not officially representing Her Majesty's Government. He was perfectly certain that the right hon. and learned Gentleman made that clear to the Ministers of the Khedive, but what must the outside public, the people of Egypt, have thought of the right hon. and learned Gentleman's mission? They saw that a deported tyrant, whose memory was detested, and deserved to be detested, was represented by a Member of Her Majesty's Government in an attempt to get more money out of the country he had oppressed and plundered. They did not know what particular office the representative held, and they did not know what a Judge Advocate General was; but they knew that he was a Member of the Government of England, and they naturally inferred that in coming out, he came to support the views of Her Majesty's Government. They knew there were many advocates in England — Queen's Counsel and others—who would be glad to come out and press the claim of Ismail Pasha for half the fee the right hon. and learned Gentleman received, and they asked why was the right hon. and learned Gentleman chosen unless it was because he was a Member of Her Majesty's Government. His right hon. and learned Friend's Motion also declared that the Judge Advocate General's action was—

> "Calculated to introduce undesirable complications into our relations with foreign and friendly countries."

He agreed that this was so, and for the very reason that it was the Constitutional practice of Her Majesty's Government in all its intercourse with foreign Powers to be represented by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and by him only. He defied the Government to produce a case in which the Government of England had allowed any one of its Members to go out to make representations to a Foreign Power except under the guidance of the Foreign Office. They were told that Lord Salisbury did not interfere with the right hon. and learned Gentleman's mission. The Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) had said he thought it would be very undesirable that Her Majesty's Government should mix itself up in matters of this kind. He (Mr. Bryce) entirely agreed with his right hon. Friend that it would be very undesirable for the Government to do that, but they maintained that by allowing the Judge Advocate General to go out to Egypt the Government did mix themselves up in the case. It was impossible for the Government to wash their hands of responsibility in this matter. What was to be gained—what object was there—in allowing a Member of the Government to proceed to Egypt on this errand? It was a wanton breach of usage and propriety on the part of the Government. He did not make this a personal charge against the Judge Advocate General, though he thought that a man more sensitively delicate than the right hon. and learned Gentleman would not, perhaps, have undertaken the duty. If Her Majesty's Government, in whose hands the guardianship, the honour of the country, and the character of the Executive rested, chose to do exceptional and improper things, he did not greatly blame the right hon. and learned Gentleman for doing what the Government allowed him to do. It was the Government they blamed. It was the Government they asked the House to censure. He did not enter at all into the question whether this was a favourable settlement or not; but he was bound to say a good deal had been advanced to show it was a highly favourable settlement for Ismail, considering what the previous character and conduct of the ex-Khedive had been. Indeed, he recommended anyone who had a more than doubtful claim to prosecute to employ the Judge Advocate General. He recommended the Irish landlords, for instance. to employ the right hon. and learned Gentleman. Why should Ismail Pasha be treated with special indulgence? Why should he have any compensation at all? As a matter of fact, he was very fortunate in being allowed to leave Egypt with such an extravagant Civil List. If he (Mr. Bryce) were to draw the House aside from the main issue, he thought he could meet the contention of the hon. and learned Attorney General with regard to the merits of the settlement; and could show that the settlement was unfair to the people of Egypt; but he did not desire to do that. He was willing to assume for the purpose of argument that the settlement was a proper one; but what he asked the House to do was to assert that nothing of this kind should happen again, and to warn the Government that they could not with impunity allow themselves to be doubly represented at Foreign Courts, and to appear to exercise an unfair and coercive influence over a dependent Power.

Sir GEORGE ELLIOTT (Monmouth) said, he would not detain the House more than a very few moments. He had listened to the whole of the debate, and he could not refrain from making one or two observations. He had recently visited Egypt; since, indeed, the business under review was concluded; and he had had an opportunity of seeing and conversing with all the parties concerned in the negotiations—the Khedive, Tewfik Pasha; Sir Edgar Vincent, Sir Evelyn Baring, and several of the Native Pashas. Without desiring to enter into the complicated question as to whether it was right or wrong that the settlement arrived at ought to have been come to, he felt he ought to inform the House that, so far as he could judge, the people of Egypt were well satisfied with what was done. He was not clever enough to enter into the argument as to whether the settlement was a just one or not, but possibly if he had had any hand in the negotiations, the arrangements would have been a little different. [*Cheers.*] He never liked to be cheered by hon. Members opposite, but, after all, that was all he had to say upon the subject.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) said, that if he understood the right hon. Baronet the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) aright, the right hon. Baronet suggested that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Judge Advocate General (Mr. Marriott) had not directly communicated with the Egyptian Minister, had not made the claim a matter of argument with the Egyptian Minister himself, but had done what he had done through Sir Edgar Vincent and Sir Evelyn Baring.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: No, I said quite the reverse. I said that Her Majesty's Government had declined to interfere in the matter at all, and had said that if the claim was to be preferred, it must be preferred by the ex-Khedive to the Egyptian Government.

Mr. BRADLAUGH said, he was sorry if he had misunderstood the right hon. Baronet. He certainly understood that that was the contention of the right hon. and learned Judge Advocate General himself. What was clear from the Papers was——

Mr. MARRIOTT: My contention was that I had only dealings with Sir Edgar Vincent, who is an Egyptian Minister. He is the Chancellor of the Exchequer or the Finance Minister of Egypt, and has acted very well in the interest of Egypt.

Mr. BRADLAUGH said, he understood the right hon. and learned Gentleman to say now that such arguments as he addressed were addressed to Sir Edgar Vincent. The Papers showed that not to be correct.

Mr. MARRIOTT: It is absolutely true.

Mr. BRADLAUGH said, that unfortunately the right hon. and learned Gentleman wrote differently, for he wrote to Nubar Pasha—"*Faisant suite à notre conversation.*"

Mr. MARRIOTT: Nubar Pasha is one of the Ministry. Sir Edgar Vincent is one of the same Ministry. They meet in council, and when I talked to Sir Edgar Vincent I presumed I talked to the whole Ministry.

Mr. BRADLAUGH said, that that did not correctly represent the statement in the Papers. It was clear from the Papers he held in his hand that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Judge Advocate General made a larger claim on behalf of the ex-Khedive to the Egyptian Ministry than the Egyptian Ministry were disposed to accept. It was clear from the Papers that the claim was urged by the right hon and learned Gentleman as advocate for Ismail Pasha upon Nubar Pasha personally. [Mr. Marriott dissented.] Then it was clear the right hon. and learned Gentleman wrote what he did not mean. It was clear from what the right hon. and learned Gentleman said that their conversation did not mean conversation with the man with whom they talked, but meant conversation with someone else. There were negotiations with Nubar Pasha quite separate from the negotiations with Sir Edgar Vincent. He would show that the statement of the right hon. and learned Judge Advocate General was incorrect. In Sir Evelyn Baring's despatch to the Marquess of Salisbury it was said that at the commencement of the present year the Judge Advocate General arrived in Egypt charged by Ismail Pasha and other members of the ex-Khedivial family to arrange a settlement of their claims against the Egyptian Government, and Sir Evelyn Baring added that this claim put forward by the right hon. and learned Gentleman differed very considerably from the preposterous claim hitherto advanced by Ismail Pasha and his family. Sir Evelyn Baring went on to say that—

> "Mr. Marriott's proposed settlement of the claim was presented to the Egyptian Government and was declared by them to be quite inadmissible;"

and then he spoke of the negotiations which took place between Sir Edgar Vincent and the Judge Advocate General. The right hon. and learned Gentleman in his own letter, dated the 23rd of January, addressed to Nubar Pasha, and replied to by Nubar Pasha separately, referred expressly to the conversation he had had with Nubar Pasha himself. All he (Mr. Bradlaugh) could say was that he knew English, and that when he was in France he fancied he knew French. If what he read in the Papers did not mean that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Judge Advocate General talked personally to Nubar Pasha on the subject and discussed the claim with him, the language had no meaning whatever. The right hon. and learned Judge Advocate General did not say in his letter, "referring to the negotiations with your Government," he did not say—"referring to the representations made by me to Sir Edgar Vincent," but he said "*faisant suite à notre conversation,*" and that could only mean that he had had a conversation with Nubar Pasha. Contradictions were valueless in face of the record in writing of the statement of the right hon. and learned Gentleman. If the Amendment were pressed to a division he should vote for it, and by his vote mean—

> "That in the opinion of this House no Member of Her Majesty's Government ought to have acted as the Advocate of a dethroned Prince presenting a claim to a Government which had been rejected by that Government; that especially in view of the position in which we stand towards Egypt no Member of Her Majesty's Government ought, even as a labour of love, still less for personal gain, to have gone behind the backs of the public and of the Ministry to prefer such a claim as this."

He should vote for the Amendment for the purpose of showing to the world that there was, at any rate, one man who repudiated the notion of English authority being used by the lips of a Minister to give credence to a claim—not a claim for £86,000, as it was asserted to be by the hon. and learned Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster), but a most preposterous claim, a claim, reduced it was true, but still of a high amount, rejected for years by the Egyptian Government, and only allowed at last in consequence of the moral pressure of English authority.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 126; Noes 218: Majority 92.—(Div. List, No. 43.)

Main Question, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," by leave *withdrawn*.

Committee upon *Monday* next.

SUPPLY [15TH MARCH].—REPORT.

[ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question (this day),

> "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution 'That a sum, not exceeding £3,614,903, be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charge for the Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1889.'"

Question again proposed.

Debate *resumed*.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.), in rising to a point of Order, said, in reference to the second Order of the Day which had just been read, he had to draw the Speaker's attention to the fact that this Order was on the Paper for the Morning Sitting; that it was under discussion at 10 minutes to 7; and that the new Rule of Procedure dealing with this point was in these words—

> "That when such business has not been disposed of at Seven o'clock, unless the House shall otherwise order, the Speaker, or Chairman if the House shall be in Committee, do leave the Chair, and the House shall resume its Sitting at Nine o'clock, when the Orders of the Day not disposed of at the Morning Sitting"—

and there was no Order but this—

> "and any Motion under discussion at ten minutes to Seven shall be set down in the Order Book after the other Orders of the Day."

Papers containing Orders of the Day were issued to Members for the Morning and the Evening Sittings. For the Evening Sitting the Orders were 11 in number; and, according to the clear words of the Rule he had read, the Order dropped at 10 minutes to 7—Report of Supply—should take its place as No. 12 on the list, while actually it had been called on as No. 2. He submitted that this was a complete departure from the Rule, and he asked the ruling of the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER said, the course followed was perfectly regular. After discussions on the Motion for going into Supply, the House passed to the Orders of the Day, and these the Government set down in the order they pleased.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR said, with all respect, he would ask the attention of the Speaker to the words of the Rule—"after the other Orders of the Day." True, the Government had the right to arrange Government Business in what order they pleased; but, in the exercise of that right, they should not pass from the clear direction of the Rule.

MR. SPEAKER said, what had been done was in conformity with the general practice.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) said, it had been the general practice; but the House was entering now upon new practices and new procedure, and as, under the New Rules, this point had never risen before, he would ask whether the Government could act in spite of the words of the Rule?

MR. SPEAKER said, when he spoke of the general practice he should have said the universal practice under Morning Sittings of the House.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR said, his question was this—Whether the Rule as regards setting down dropped Orders after the other Orders of the Day should only apply to private Members, and should not apply to Government Business?

The CHAIRMAN of COMMITTEES (Mr. Courtney) (Cornwall, Bodmin) said, on the point of Order the hon. Member was quite in error. What he called a New Rule was simply a repetition of the old Rule, not a New Rule at all. If the hon. Member would look at the old Rule for Morning Sittings on Tuesdays and Fridays, he would find the same words as now were contained in the Standing Order. The only difference was that it was a Standing Order. The Rule always was that Orders not disposed of at the Morning Sitting should be put down after the other Orders of the Day. But the Orders of the Day for the evening were not settled until after the Morning Sitting on Fridays. On Tuesdays it was different, but on Fridays the Government had the settling of the Order of Business.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR said, he regretted that he was unable to finish his remarks before 7 o'clock. He wished to challenge the Vote on the ground that the present First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) was not a proper person to be entrusted with the distribution of these funds, so far, at least, as that distribution affected Civil servants as such. He submitted that the right hon. Gentleman had manifested in the House, by his answers to Questions put to him, an indisposition to be equitable and fair. That was his submission, and the ground upon which he challenged the Vote. He (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) did not wish to shrink from the responsibility of what he was saying, and wished the House to understand that he was making what might be considered a personal attack upon the First Lord of the Treasury. The right hon. Gentleman had shown by his answers in the House, at once evasive and contradictory, that members of the Civil Service had no ground to look to him for fair and equitable treatment in regard to any conduct they might think fit to adopt in respect to matters political. The right hon. Gentleman had been asked a number of Questions perfectly straightforward and simple, which it was open to him to consider carefully before he answered, but which he answered in such a way as to show that he was prepared to deal out one measure of justice to one set of persons and another measure of justice to another set of persons. Some time ago a challenge was thrown out from the Government Bench with regard to a gentleman employed in one of the Dockyards, and the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) justified his Department for allowing that official to exercise his political rights untrammelled and unchallenged. When that noble Lord had completed his answer, he (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) invited the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury to say whether the same rule obtained in all other Departments of the Public Service. The answer of the right hon. Gentleman was to the effect that the same rule governed all the Departments. On the first of the present month, he accordingly put to the right hon. Gentleman the Question whether the Board of Inland Revenue last year addressed to a Civil servant of that Department a letter in which the following sentence occurred—

> "You cannot be permitted by them—the Board of Inland Revenue—to lecture, or openly speak, or take part in discussions upon Home Rule."

Secondly, the Question went on to ask whether Sir Alfred Slade—Receiver General of the Inland Revenue Department—was at that time a prominent member of the Primrose League? Now, at that time it was a fact that an officer of the Inland Revenue had been censured—cautioned was the official phrase—but it amounted to censure—for taking part in a Home Rule meeting, and Sir Alfred Slade, who was one of the heads of that Department, had also taken part in proceedings of the Primrose League. The answer of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury was that the words quoted were used, and that they expressed the rule generally throughout the Civil Service in regard to all shades of politics. He went on to say that Sir Alfred Slade—the Receiver General of the Inland Revenue—was trustee of a certain portion of the funds of the Primrose League; but, as such, he did not consider that that gentleman could be regarded as a prominent member of the

League. Here, then, was an admission that, within the knowledge of the Government, Sir Alfred Slade was a member of the Primrose League. It might be mentioned, also, that in a subsequent answer the right hon. Gentleman admitted that the Primrose League did come within the meaning of the rule. It was admitted that Sir Alfred Slade was a member of the Primrose League; that he was trustee of some of the funds; but it was implied that he was nothing more than a trustee of a certain portion of the funds. Now, what were the facts?

MR. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge) rose to Order. Was the hon. Gentleman in order in going through the same arguments, and repeating the same observations, upon which he was engaged before 7 o'clock.

MR. SPEAKER said, the hon. Member was in Order. It did not strike him that the hon. Member was repeating himself. He was entitled to amplify the argument upon which he was engaged when Business was suspended.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR said, he was sorry if he should appear wearisome with a twice-told tale, but he was saying no more than was necessary to make his case clear to the House at large. The same day he asked another question, whether the following rule was in force in the Customs Department?

MR. DIXON-HARTLAND again rose to Order. Was it competent for the hon. Member to go on with exactly the same words he had previously used?

MR. SPEAKER called upon Mr. Arthur O'Connor to proceed.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR continued—

> "You are not to hold any corporate office, nor are you in any way to interfere in the proceedings for the election of a Member of Parliament beyond recording your vote, nor are you to be a member of an Orange Lodge, or to take part in any party procession, nor to belong to any political society, nor are you to subscribe to or be a member of a political society, or attend public meetings held for political purposes, or subscribe to funds for such purposes."

That was a totally different rule from that in the Inland Revenue Department. The right hon. Gentleman said the rule had been altered by the Board of Customs in 1874, when the Disabilities Removal Act was passed, and since that time the restraints as to taking part in elections beyond recording votes had been removed from the rule. Now, he (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) asked the House to observe the evasive character of the answer of the First Lord of the Treasury. He could not contest the fact that there was one rule for the Inland Revenue and another for the Customs Department, but he said the rule referred to had been altered by the Act of 1874. Perfectly true, but not the whole truth. The rule that obtained in the Customs Department was that an officer should not hold a corporate office or be a member of an Orange Lodge, take part in Party processions, or belong to any political society. The right hon. Gentleman admitted that the Primrose League was a political society—

> "Nor subscribe to, or be a member of, or attend any meetings of any association for political purposes"—

the right hon. Gentleman had admitted that Sir Alfred Slade was trustee for the funds of the Primrose League—

> "Nor one for to subscribe the funds raised for such purposes."

Now his contention was that there were different rules in different Departments of the Public Service, and that in one Department there was one rule for the heads of the Department, or for those in high positions, and a totally different rule and practice for subordinates in that Department. The Inland Revenue officer in Norfolk or Suffolk was reprimanded, censured, and had a black mark recorded against him because he attended a Home Rule meeting, while the head of his Department was allowed to be one of the chief officials of the Primrose League, vice chairman of the League, a member of the General Purposes Committee, a member of the Finance Committee, and a trustee of the funds of the Primrose League. On the 6th of the present month he asked the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury if this was not so, and the right hon. Gentleman said that Sir Alfred Slade was trustee for some of the funds of the League, and *ex officio* he was a member of the League, but that he abstained from taking part in any proceedings of the League which would infringe the rule of the Inland Revenue

—namely, that officials should abstain from taking part in, or speaking at, any political meeting. Upon that he asked a further question, whether it was true that at a certain political meeting held in Dublin, certain members of the Public Service—General Sankey, Chief Commissioner of Works, Mr. Roberts, Junior Commissioner, and Mr. Soady, Secretary to the Board of Works—had not only taken part, but appeared on the platform on the occasion when that meeting was addressed by the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) and the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen)? The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury found himself driven into a corner to excuse those officials who had taken part in a political meeting. What excuse did he make? These gentlemen, he said, did attend the public meeting referred to, but they did so in their "private capacity." Well, the subordinate member of the Inland Revenue Service in Norfolk, who was censured for attending a Home Rule meeting, attended that meeting in his "private capacity." Every person who attended a public meeting, whether a Civil servant or not, attended in a private and not an official capacity. But the right hon. Gentleman was determined to screen his friends the heads of Departments, while ready enough to mete out the strictest possible justice, in an official sense, to subordinate offenders. Then the other day he (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) asked yet another question of the right hon. Gentleman, who then thought it necessary to make a general statement of what the Government thought about the matter. Now, he (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) heard, had read, and re-read that answer, and confessed he could not make head or tail of it; there was nothing definite in it from beginning to end. When, to-day, he asked, further, whether there were any reasons of a public character why a Treasury Minute should not be issued defining the rights or the limitations of the right of Civil servants in respect of their political action, securing also equal treatment for all Civil servants whatever their station, the right hon. Gentleman fell back on his answer of the other day, and refused to explain himself any further. What did that amount to, if it meant anything? It amounted to this—that there was some well-understood rule in the Service, so well understood that there were few infractions of it, according to which heads of Departments were to have authority to draw up regulations for the several Departments and their subordinates, which enabled the latter to realize clearly enough what their duties and what the limitations of their political rights were. Now, he (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) objected altogether to the principle that heads of Departments should have the right to draw up in their several branches of the Service differing, conflicting rules in regard to the conduct of their subordinates, while they themselves, when offending against recognized rules, were to be protected by the First Lord of the Treasury on the ground that they acted in their private capacity. He could not see what possible objection there could be to treating all Departments of the Civil Service alike, no matter what the status of the official—that one rule for all should be promulgated, so that every Civil servant should know exactly how he stood. The Inland Revenue officer to whom he had referred asked what rule he had infringed, and the Board were unable to point to any such rule, for, in fact, it did not exist. His contention was that the right hon. Gentleman, having Questions put to him in such a way, throwing light the one upon the other, must have seen perfectly well that the rule asserted in one case was violated in another; but more than once he had justified the unfair treatment of subordinate officers, while shielding flagrant breaches of the rule on the part of heads of Departments. Therefore Civil servants could not expect unprejudiced, equitable, and fair treatment from the hands of such a Minister; and he must, therefore, object to the present First Lord of the Treasury being entrusted with the distribution of funds that included the payment of Civil servants. It was not consistent with discipline in the Service when the right hon. Gentleman had shown such a tendency to partiality and unfairness. The right hon. Gentleman had allowed himself to suggest that every Home Rule organization was illegal, and every Conservative association necessarily legal. In reply to a Question put to him, he had the good taste to say that members of the Civil Service knew perfectly well what their rights were; but with regard to Home Rule he would only say they were entitled to belong to any association that was not illegal. He admired the lucidity and high authority of the right hon. Gentleman; but it was unnecessary for him to state that Civil servants were not allowed to belong to associations that were not legal. But there were Home Rule associations not in proclaimed districts in Ireland, but in every county in England, which were perfectly legal; and what he wished to ask was that Civil servants in this country—not in Ireland—should, whatever their position, be allowed as much freedom, as much liberty, in the exercise of their rights as citizens as was accorded to heads of Departments, and as secured to those heads of Departments by the Treasury itself. Under these circumstances he meant to object to, and vote against, the Motion that the House agree with this Resolution.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, he greatly regretted that the answers it had been his duty to give to Questions put to him during the last two or three weeks had not been satisfactory to the hon. Member. It had been his desire to assure the hon. Member and the House that the Treasury and the Government intended to exercise, and had exercised, perfect fairness towards all members of the Civil Service without regard to political opinions. If he had failed to convey that intimation to the hon. Gentleman he deeply regretted it. He could not expect to entirely secure the confidence of the hon. Member; but there were other Members of the House who would understand that if he had the misfortune to be First Lord of the Treasury in a Conservative Government he had still the consciousness that it was his duty as a Member of that Government to see that equal justice was done to all public servants. That had been his aim and desire, and if he had failed to satisfy the hon. Gentleman entirely in his answers it was because he wished as far as possible to abstain from interfering with the liberty he desired that Civil servants should possess. The hon. Member laid stress on the fact that in his answer regarding Sir Alfred Slade he said the connection of that gentleman with the Primrose League was not inconsistent with the office he held in the Public Service; but he simply stated the fact communicated to him—he had stated that which he understood to be the truth—that Sir Alfred Slade had never on any occasion taken part in a public political meeting. He had drawn a distinction in such cases, and it was a distinction—the propriety of which would be recognized by hon. Members on both sides of the House—between such action and merely belonging to a political association. There were many Civil servants who belonged to political associations and political clubs, and who were never interfered with unless they took part in public meetings.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR said, he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would excuse him for interrupting; but was it not the case that there had not been any rule in the Inland Revenue Department, the only known rule being that in the Customs against belonging to a political association?

MR. W. H. SMITH said, he did not intend to enter into an argument with the hon. Gentleman.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR said, it was not an argument—it was a question of fact.

MR. W. H. SMITH said, all that he had said was that there was an understanding that Civil servants in the Inland Revenue and Customs Department should not take part in public meetings, and the understanding was one that the hon. Member himself and the House would recognize as a useful, important, and proper one. It was obvious that persons having to discharge duties in connection with Customs or Inland Revenue should avoid all conduct that would expose them to the imputation of partiality. But if it was the desire of the hon. Member to restrict the liberties of Civil servants——

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: On the contrary.

MR. W. H. SMITH said, then he trusted that the House would be content to leave with the Government the responsibility of dealing out equal justice to all the officers of the Public Service whoever they might be.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: That is all I ask.

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, he regretted that he was unable to continue this discussion, because of the necessity for now coming to a decision on the Vote; he trusted, therefore, that if the hon. Gentleman had any further ground of complaint he would take another opportunity of referring to the subject.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR said, as the right hon. Gentleman had not answered him at all, he certainly should do so.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) said, he had no intention of talking out the Motion.

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, he would enter into the subject on a future occasion.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR said, then he would postpone his observations.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Subsequent Resolution *agreed to.*

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

Ordered, That the Resolution which, upon the 9th day of this instant March, was reported from the Committee of Supply, and which Resolution was then agreed to by the House, be now read:—

"That a number of Land Forces, not exceeding 149,667, all ranks, be maintained for the Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland at Home and Abroad, excluding Her Majesty's Indian Possessions, during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1889."

Ordered, That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide, during twelve months, for the Discipline and Regulation of the Army, and that Mr. Secretary Stanhope, Lord George Hamilton, the Judge Advocate General, and Mr. Brodrick do prepare and bring it in.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 179.]

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT.

Ordered, That the Committee on Debates and Proceedings in Parliament have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr Jackson.*)

MOTIONS.

HANDLOOM WEAVERS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Colonel Saunderson, Bill for the better regulation of certain articles of Linen Manufacture woven upon Handlooms, *ordered* to be brought in by Colonel Saunderson, Mr. Macartney, Colonel Waring, and Mr. O'Neill.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 175.]

LAND PERPETUITY (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Macartney, Bill to amend the Law relating to Land held in perpetuity at variable rents in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Macartney, Mr. T. W. Russell, and Colonel Waring.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 176.]

CORONERS' ELECTIONS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Wootton Isaacson, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Election of Coroners, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Wootton Isaacson, Mr. Gourley, Mr. Ambrose, and Colonel Hughes.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 178.]

CORN RETURNS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Jasper More, Bill to amend the Laws relating to Corn Returns, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Jasper More, Mr. Charles Gray, and Colonel Cornwallis West.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 177.]

It being One of the clock, Mr. Speaker left the Chair without Question put.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 19*th March,* 1888.

MINUTES.]—Sat First in Parliament—The Duke of Rutland, after the death of his brother.

Public Bills — *First Reading* — Universities (Scotland) * (47).

Committee — *Report* — Statute Law Revision * (35).

HOUSE OF LORDS.

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

The Earl of ROSEBERY, in rising to call attention to the constitution of this House, and to move that a Committee be appointed to inquire thereon, said: My Lords, in rising to put before you the Motion of which I have given Notice, my first duty is to render my acknowledgment to my noble Friend opposite (the Earl of Dunraven), who, having given Notice of a Motion practically of the same character in ignorance of the Notice I had given publicly last Session, kindly withdrew it on being acquainted with that fact.

My Lords, it was my fate nearly four years ago to introduce a Motion to your Lordships of a character very similar to this, and I think the one that which I submit to you to-day is in a measure consequential upon the former one. I should have renewed that Motion before now had it not been for circumstances beyond my control. The year after I had brought it forward I descended from that eminence of freedom, the Benches behind the Front Bench, and took part as a Member of the Government in the Session of 1885; in the Session of 1886 I was in the same position; and I think your Lordships will acknowledge that in the Session of 1887, when I was no longer in that position, the time was by no means favourable to the renewal of that Motion. In 1886 I should have had to ask for the attention of my Colleagues when they were absorbed in another and more pressing matter; and in 1887 it would have been rather difficult to attract the attention of the public to this subject. So I come to this year, which appears to me to offer an admirable opportunity for the discussion of this question. I shall endeavour to bring it before your Lordships in a manner as free as possible from all Party bias, though it is absolutely impossible to avoid all Party questions in a matter of this character.

On a former occasion I urged that all other institutions in this country had undergone renewal or reform, and that it was not premature to urge upon your Lordships' House the need of some such measure. In the second place, I recapitulated the names of a number of Peers then in the House to show that it contained materials for, perhaps, the best Second Chamber in the world. Thirdly, I indicated further details of our procedure which seemed to me to require reconsideration and revision. Fourthly, I detailed some of the deficiencies of our Constitution, and pointed out the various elements from which we might be strengthened and reinforced; and, fifthly, I pointed out generally the dangers to which our composition made us liable. To-night I shall not require to go over any part of the same ground. It is necessary to strike deeper, because the question has taken a larger and a newer phase since then, and there is so much ground to go over that it would be difficult to accomplish such a discussion in the time.

Much has occurred since that occasion. Immediately afterwards there was a debate on the Franchise Bill, which was rejected by your Lordships' House; that was followed by a great agitation throughout the country—an agitation which, owing to that—to my mind—unfortunate circumstance, took a direction not so much in favour of the Franchise Bill as towards the reform, the mending, or the ending of your Lordships' House. I remember that two of my Colleagues in the Government of 1885 expressed themselves strongly in favour of ending this House; one in the Government of 1886 expressed himself to the same effect, and I was left almost alone in the Government on that side of the question, pleading to a somewhat listless country the advantages of a Second Chamber. That agitation died away, but left serious results, because I think it left on the minds of most thinking men the impression that something must be done, and that this House could not remain as it was, more especially after the Franchise Bill had placed it side by side with a strong, powerful, and democratic Assembly.

Now I pass from that incident to another. In 1885, the year succeeding our debate upon this question, there was a great reform effected in the Upper House of Hungary, a House constructed substantially on the same principles as our own, but a mere infant in age as compared with it, dating, I think, only from the beginning of the 17th century. That showed that the question of reform of Second Chambers was in the air. The Hungarian House consisted of some 750 Members, with some 206 families hereditarily represented in it. These families are now reduced to 91 by a property qualification, but 21 of these families command no less than 115 votes in that

Assembly, two alone having 30 Representatives between them. The number of that House is about 400; there are 50 Life Peers, in the first place elected by the Chamber itself and subsequently nominated by the Crown. That shows that the Hungarian House were alive to the question of reform and the unwieldiness of their numbers. But we also, since 1884, have had some experience bearing upon the latter of these two questions.

Now it is always taken for granted in works of history and in speeches on this question that Mr. Pitt was a great sinner in respect to adding to the number of this House. It was usually supposed that Pitt, in his tenure of Office, recommended the addition of no fewer than 140 Peers; but I have gone over these figures somewhat carefully, and I think that Mr. Pitt in this case—as in some other instances—is unjustly maligned. Mr. Pitt, as far as I can make out from *Beatson's Political Index*, was the means of creating or further elevating some 122 Peers; exclusive of Peers of the Blood Royal —who are on a totally different footing —and Peeresses in their own right. But I do not think that this is a fair statement of the case with respect to Mr. Pitt, because of this number 40 were persons elevated to other ranks of the Peerage, already being Peers at the time; 36 were Scotch or Irish Peers, and I venture to think that this principle will recommend itself to your Lordships, that Irish and Scotch Peers are not in the same position as Commoners when raised to Peerages of the United Kingdom, but are rather in the nature of an amalgamation than of an extraneous addition to this House. Therefore, we are left with the clear addition to your Lordships' House of 46 Peers in 17 years of Office.

I do not take his second Administration, because, like the Hundred Days of Napoleon, it was very unlike his first tenure of power, and he left, then, no substantial addition to the House of Lords. I then compare Mr. Pitt with more modern Ministers. I take the period from April, 1880, to June, 1887, because I like to make Her Majesty's Jubilee an epoch. In that time 65 Peers were recommended by the Minister of the day. Taking from these, as I have done from Mr. Pitt's Peerages, the Scotch and Irish Peers, we have a total of 53, so that in seven years there have been created considerably more Peers than Mr. Pitt created in his 17 years of Office. I admit that one Peerage, that conferred on the late lamented Sir Thomas Erskine May, was extinct almost as soon as created, while three were in the nature of Life Peerages. However, I will not confine myself to the last seven years: I will take a period from June 26, 1885, to June 21, 1887, a period of less than two years. In that time there were 38 Peers created. Deduct six for the Scotch and Irish Peers on the same principle as I have done before, and you have 32 Peers created in two years, as against 46 created in 17 years by the great sinner, Mr. Pitt. I think that Mr. Pitt was hardly dealt with in this case; indeed, I am not blaming any Minister. It is probably due to the irresistible tendencies of a democratic age that this House should be largely recruited by Gentlemen who are willing to form part of it.

But this is not merely an absolute disadvantage in the sense of swelling our numbers — it is a growing and increasing disadvantage for the future. Merit in this country is not likely to decrease, and, therefore, the number of admissions to the Peerage is likely to increase as time goes on, and will gradually swell it to unmanageable proportions. But what is worse is this — that that increase raises a great Constitutional question. The sole method by which the two Houses can be brought into harmony when they differ upon measures which may be repugnant to your Lordships' House, but which are desired by the majority of the electoral body, is the creation of Peerages. But your Lordships' House will soon become, or rather has become, so large with reference to the small numerical minority which sits behind the Bench I occupy, that hardly a squadron or a regiment of Peers would be able to redress the balance in certain contingencies. Now, we have had, as I have said, the advantage of precept with reference to this question. I will read a remarkable passage which calls upon your Lordships to reform yourselves without further delay—

> "Take another question of great national importance. We put in the forefront of our political creed the maintenance of the House of Lords as

> an independent and co-ordinate branch of the Legislature. We praise the eloquence of its debates, the businesslike character of its proceedings, the ability and knowledge of many of its Members. We look to it not merely to smooth down the rough excrescences of the legislation which is passed through the popular Assembly, but also, if the necessity should arise, to resist any attempt at grave changes in our Constitution by that popular Assembly until the will of the people is distinctly declared. But can any Conservative say that he is absolutely contented at present with the composition and working of the House of Lords? Can we not conceive it might be possible, by wise and careful change, to give that House greater popular authority and weight than it at present possesses? Cannot we learn something from the evident reluctance of the Radicals to reform that ancient Institution, and their jeers when they remark on the increasing rarity of its debates and the small proportionate attendance of its Members, and of anything in which they think they can find a proof of its declining power? And looking at that can we, as Conservatives, say that it is quite consistent with the safety of our Constitution that Parliamentary reforms should be confined to one branch of the Legislature alone? I am as anxious as anyone to maintain the hereditary principle in our Legislature. I would do nothing to impair the independence of the House of Lords; but something surely it would not be impossible for the House of Lords itself to do—something to purify itself from those black sheep who can now disgrace it with impunity. And surely it is worth consideration whether the entrance to that House of able laymen of moderate means might not be made easier by the extension of the Life Peerages which are now held by our Bishops and lawyers, and whether the principle of selection, which has existed ever since the Union, in the Scotch and Irish Peerages might not be extended to the Peerage of Great Britain."

Those are not the words of any rash or headlong innovator, or of a Member of the Party to which I belong; they are the words of a man who led the House of Commons for the Government, though he was not in Office when he spoke them; they are the words of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who made the speech from which I have taken them in February, and who, I am glad to say, is able to resume his seat in the House of Commons as a Member of Her Majesty's Government. But it is not from Sir Michael Hicks-Beach alone that we had an expression of opinion on the subject. We had, the week before last, the question raised in the House of Commons of the reform of this House, and there were two remarkable incidents in connection with that debate. One was, that no Member of the House of Commons, on whatever side he sat, had one word to say for the existing constitution of this House. That is a remarkable circumstance, considering that the House of Commons, as at present constituted, gives an unbroken majority to Her Majesty's present Advisers. The second noteworthy incident to which I would refer is this. The House of Commons is led by a man of great weight, but of few words. Mr. W. H. Smith delivered on that occasion the longest speech, I think, which he has made since he has led that House, and I venture to call your Lordships' attention to some of his remarks. He said—

> "No Second Chamber can long remain deaf to the public opinion of this country, but must advance towards it if that public opinion is consistent with the interests of the country. The remark made by the hon. Member for Southport, that the reform of the House of Lords must come from the Conservative Party and from the House of Lords, I accept. The assertion has great value, and I earnestly trust will meet with a full consideration."—(See *ante*, 797.)

I warmly support that remark. But we have further food for reflection in what occurred since 1884. The Franchise Bill of 1884 enormously strengthened the House of Commons. What I may call its propelling power, which had been greatly increased in 1867, was immeasurably multiplied by the Act of 1884, which thus brought more glaringly into light the anomaly of two Houses nominally co-extensive and co-equal, but one representing the great mass of the democracy, the other representing interests important indeed, but still considered by the public at large as the interests mainly of a class. I cannot help fearing, on behalf of this House, that as time goes on that disproportion will be still more largely increased, and that the new piece of democracy sown on this old garment must only make the rent appear larger.

There is another point on which I must touch, but in no Party spirit. Your Lordships will remember the Home Rule policy which was inaugurated by Mr. Gladstone in 1886. At the Dissolution that measure received the support of some 1,100,000 or 1,200,000 electors—very nearly half the number that went to the poll. They only fell short by 86,000 of the opposing force. That minority is represented in the House of Commons by some 200 Members who follow my right hon.

Friend, and they are assisted by 86 Irish Members who follow Mr. Parnell, but who concur in this policy. That represents a minority on a question of great and vital importance of 286, and how is that minority represented in this House? I have had no opportunity of computing, and I do not wish now to have an opportunity of testing it by a vote; but I believe there are some 30 out of 556, or about 5 per cent of the entire number, and there is not a single Irish Peer in this House that I know of who is a supporter of that policy. ["Hear, hear!" *from the Ministerial Benches.*] Noble Lords may rejoice at that; but to those who endeavour to look further ahead it must afford matter for painful reflection.

I say, then, that what lawyers call incompatibility of temper between the two yoke-fellows, the House of Lords and the House of Commons, is daily increasing, and is not unlikely to increase. It is quite true that at this moment the majority in both Houses belongs to the same Party; but you have this disadvantage—that the minority in one House is almost absolutely unrepresented in the other; and if the minority in the House of Commons, by any strange or sinister chance, as you might say, were to become a majority, the fraction in this House that represents the minority in the other House would still remain a fraction. That anomaly is daily and hourly increasing, and threatens to become a gulf yawning and impassable. One Party in power enjoys a practical omnipotence; the other Party is never absolutely in power. Whether in or out of Office it is galled by a perpetual barrier, a constant stumbling-block, an endless disability. So the Divisions in this House represent rather the passions of a Party or a class than the deliberate reasoning of a Senate.

When we come to reckon up the forces of both Houses which may, at any moment, by a General Election, change sides, we are still more struck. The House of Commons rests on the votes of some 6,000,000. What we represent is not so easy to divine. But if there were to be a General Election which gave the majority of the 6,000,000 of electors to the present minority in the House of Commons, the disproportion would be of some gravity. No doubt, the present majority would have a large section of the electors. But in these great Constitutional questions, where the House of Lords is pitted against the House of Commons, the question very soon ceases to be the original question placed before the country, and the country takes up, not the question placed before it, but the problem of the reform of this House, and even those electors who approve the general policy of this House do not like to see the action of their Representatives set at naught. Is it not wise, then, at a moment of comparative calmness, to reckon up our strength and our weakness? Our strength lies in illustrious Members, in ancient tradition, in persons who represent in the country somewhat wealth, somewhat ancient descent, and some even what genius can give. It may be allowed to a political opponent to remark that the noble Marquess opposite (the Marquess of Salisbury) appears to combine all three. But no Legislature in these days, placed as it is relatively to the other House, can rest either on tradition, descent, or even genius: what is required is the broad basis of popular interest and popular support.

In those things which I have mentioned is our strength. What are our weaknesses? They can be summed up in one comprehensive phrase. They lie, I think, in the indiscriminate and untempered application of the hereditary principle. There is no trace in this House of discrimination or selection, except in the case of the Scotch and Irish Peers. Every man in this House, to use Beaumarchais' famous phrase, can sit in this House who has given himself the trouble to be born; and I venture to think that this indiscriminate principle, even if it worked well, would still be indefensible in principle. Your Lordships will remember what Franklin said about hereditary legislators. He said of them that there would be more propriety, because less hazard of mischief, in hereditary Professors of Mathematics. I venture to think that a House based solely, or even mainly, on the hereditary principle is a House based upon the sand. It is by no means essential to your Lordships' House—it is not a modern innovation, but it is by no means an ancient incident. It was not until the time of the dissolution of the monasteries that hereditary Members had even a majority in this House. It was not until 1539 that the hereditary element in this House obtained a bare majority. We can well understand how this occurred. We trace the hereditary principle to the feudal system, which required a totally different test of fitness to that of legislative fitness. The feudal system required in the great vassals of the Crown only a test of military fitness; and now, when we have abolished the feudal system, we still maintain the hereditary principle, which was established with a totally different object, to keep up the legislative functions of this House.

If the indiscriminate hereditary principle is not, as I think, defensible in theory, does it work well in practice? I know it is said that the House of Lords works well, and that you could not easily find a better; but I venture to think that that does not represent the state of the case. In the first place, the hereditary principle, as applied in this House, makes legislators of men who do not wish to be legislators, and Peers of men who do not wish to be Peers. I venture to say that many of your Lordships knew other Peers who have no wish to be legislators, who are unwillingly legislators, and would gladly be relieved of those functions; and I venture to say that others of your Lordships know Peers who were not willing to be Peers, who were anxious to escape being Peers, and who would gladly cease to be Peers. It may be said that that is the misfortune of the ordinary British citizen when he is called to serve upon a jury. But the ordinary British citizen, when called to serve upon a jury, views that as one of the rare and inevitable misfortunes of his life; but with the Peer it is a fortune or a misfortune which ceases only with death.

But it does not merely make unwilling legislators, it also makes unfit legislators. I have quoted to you what Sir Michael Hicks-Beach has said on the subject. It is not a particularly agreeable one to dwell upon; but I think we may say generally that 500 or 600 not unprolific families must always be accompanied by a proportion of black sheep. I do not think the percentage in this House is greater than in any other 500 or 600 families—I should rather be inclined to say less; but a percentage in a hereditary Chamber, be it large or small, is a thing you cannot admit. What you require in a hereditary Chamber, by the mere fact and principle of its existence, is an unblemished succession of hereditary virtue, hereditary wisdom, and hereditary discretion. It is quite true that the other House of Parliament is also capable of accommodating black sheep, and does accommodate them. But the case of the House of Commons is very widely different. In the case of the House of Commons the responsibility does not lie upon the House. It lies even less upon the individual himself. The wind of the electorate bloweth where it listeth. The electors choose whom they wish; and if they choose a knave or a fool, the responsibility is not so much on that knave or that fool, nor on the House which accepts him, but falls mainly and entirely on the people who sent him to that House. But the responsibility in our case falls on the very principle of our existence, and places that principle of existence at the mercy of any unhappy accident. If a Peer should happen to be a knave or a fool people outside do not greatly blame him, but at once begin to talk of the constitution of the hereditary Chamber in which he sits, and they say — "This man whom we consider unworthy is able at this moment to go down and give a vote equal to the vote of any noble Lordon the Ministerial Bench." The strength of your anchorage in this House is only as great as that of the weakest link in the chain, and some day a series of unfortunate accidents may bring about a condition of things with regard to this House which not 10, or 20, or 100 just persons may avail to counteract.

There are cases of hereditary vice and virtue, but you can predicate nothing. Lord Chatham left an illustrious son, but it was the wrong son he left to this House. All the three Earls of Harrowby have sat in the Cabinets of this country, and I think the noble Marquess opposite is the third of his family who has been Prime Minister. But these prodigies are not the rule; and if they were, the House cannot rest upon prodigies alone. As there is no rule you have to create one, and then you assume too much. When you are creating a hereditary Peer you are attempting far more than is possible. You are creating a man not merely for his fitness as a legislator, but you are defining the generations of which he may be the ancestor, and, outstepping all human faculty and human possibility, you usurp the position of Providence, and make legislators of the unborn.

But there is another argument with regard to the application of the hereditary principle which, if it had any validity at all, is one which would have a great deal of weight. They say the Crown is hereditary, and therefore, when you attack the hereditary principle, you attack the Crown. As to that, I should venture to say that I do not attack the hereditary principle, and I do not think any man would be wise to attack it. All our lives are conducted on the hereditary principle; it pervades every family; it guides every fortune; it rejoices by the cradle of the new-born babe, and cheers the chamber of death. You cannot ignore it in its strict sense; but it may be applied or misapplied, and that which gives dignity and stability to the Throne may not give dignity and stability to the Legislature.

I would further remark with regard to the Crown that in that case it is not a case of pure and indiscriminating heredity. The Crown, as is well known, did not descend to the present family by mere hereditary descent; it rested on a broader and a more popular basis. In the next place, the principle of heredity in the Crown is guarded and fenced by every sort of precaution. The Crown has no legislative responsibility; the Crown has no Executive responsibility; and in respect of the former, at any rate, it differs largely from this House. Those responsibilities in the case of the Crown devolve upon others; in our case they remain on ourselves and on the hereditary principle.

There is a further difference, which, perhaps, involves the argument which has most weight with those who seek for the reform of this House. Both the Crown and the House of Lords have what, for the purposes of this argument, I may properly call a veto. The Crown, since the accession of the House of Hanover, has never exercised its veto. This House is always doing so. The last time the Crown exercised its veto was in 1707, in the reign of Queen Anne. This House long exercised its veto against Roman Catholics, against Dissenters, against Jews. If it had been able to maintain this veto the Premier Peer of England would not now have been sitting in this House. It has gone on interposing its veto in a manner which cannot but be called invidious, and which cannot but raise hostility against it among great bodies of the people.

Passing to another point, you will say that the veto of the Crown is an individual veto, and that the veto of this House is the veto of a Legislative Body. As regards that I may make this demur. The veto of the Crown is not an individual veto, inasmuch as it is protected by the responsibility of the Advisers of the Crown. But I will admit, for the purposes of this argument, it is an individual veto; but I would further say that the veto of this House is also an individual veto—the veto of this House is the veto of the noble Marquess opposite the Leader of the Conservative Party. And so it has been for the last 60 years. This House, which strains at a Liberal gnat, will swallow a Conservative camel. It accepted the Catholic Emancipation Bill at the hands of the Duke of Wellington, which it had always refused to accept at any Liberal hand. It accepted the repeal of the Corn Laws at the hands of Sir Robert Peel, when it refused to move in that direction at all at the bidding of the Liberal Party.

But I will take a much simpler illustration of the individual nature of that veto. There have been three great Reform Bills during the present century, in 1832, 1867, and 1884. Two of these Reform Bills were offered to this House by Liberal Governments; one, which was infinitely the most democratic of the three, was offered to this House by a Conservative Government. It was infinitely the most democratic of the three, because it laid down for the first time the principle of household suffrage for the towns, and it thus contained within it the germ of the Reform Bill of 1884. How did this House treat these Reform Bills? It threw out the Reform Bill of 1832 and the Reform Bill of 1884, which were passed through the House of Commons by Liberal Governments; but the Reform Bill of 1867, which was the most democratic of the three, it allowed to pass without a Division. Therefore, I may repeat that this House is willing, while straining at a Liberal gnat, to swallow a Conservative camel.

But, my Lords, this tremendous legislative power of life and death, if it is entrusted to an individual, should, at any rate, be entrusted to an individual of extraordinary discretion. The late Duke of Wellington led this House for a number of years. He led it with prudence and circumspection, and we read in the pages of *Greville* that many of his followers were most dissatisfied with his extreme reticence and caution. I hope that the noble Marquess opposite will excuse me if I say that he is a little impetuous in the exercise of the weapon committed to his charge. He never likes to keep his sword in its sheath. He is always trying its temper—if he is not hacking about and dealing destruction and death with it, he is always flourishing it and threatening with it. He is like a King of Hungary on his Coronation, who rides to an eminence and brandishes his sword to the four corners of the globe. I may refer, in proof of this, to the speech delivered by the noble Marquess at Oxford on the 23rd of November last, which has often been quoted. The noble Marquess said—

"I have no doubt that one effect of the amendment of the Rules of Procedure in the House of Commons will be to send from time to time, when there are bad Houses of Commons"—

everyone knows what the noble Marquess means by a "bad House of Commons"—

"a considerable number of objectionable measures to the House of Lords"—

everyone also knows what he means by "objectionable measures"—

"I hope the House of Lords will not shrink from action upon its conscientious convictions."

Far am I from wishing the House of Lords not to act on its conscientious convictions; but if the House of Lords had acted on its conscientious convictions in 1832 we should have had revolution instead of reform.

But the conversion of this House into a Party instrument has, to a great degree, weakened its influence and power. Up to 1832 the House of Lords was hardly a Party Assembly. It usually supported the Government of the day. It was Whig with Walpole, Tory with Pitt, and Tory again with Lord Liverpool; and as a result of this, and partly due to the indirect influence which Peers exercised over the other House, the House of Lords exercised great power and influence. The Governments of the last century were pillared on Peers. They formed by far the majority of each Cabinet. Mr. Pitt, when he formed his first Cabinet, was the only Commoner in the Cabinet. In his second Cabinet there was only one other Commoner. Such was the power of the House of Lords in those days that by its own independent action, though in concert with the Sovereign, it overthrew the Coalition Government which promised to be the strongest Government of the century. That was before the Reform Bill; but since then its power and influence have continually decreased. On the 7th of May, 1832, Lord Lyndhurst brought forward a Motion in this House which caused the resignation of the Government of the day. That was the last occasion on which a Motion passed in this House has had any such effect. It is easy to trace the gradual decline of the power which this House possessed. On the 3rd of June, 1833, the Duke of Wellington carried a Vote of Censure against the Government in regard to Portugal, and there was a great talk of the Government resigning, but they did not. Again, in 1839, Lord Roden carried by a small majority in this House a Motion for a Committee of Inquiry into the affairs of Ireland, and this had to be counteracted by a Vote of Confidence in the Government passed in the House of Commons. So again, in 1850, when a Motion in regard to the Don Pacifico case was carried against the Government in this House, there was great talk of resignation; but it ended in a Vote of Confidence being brought forward in the House of Commons by Mr. Roebuck, and carried. Since that time all question of this House turning out the Government has dedeparted. The control of this House over the measures of the Government still subsists; but the control of this House over the Government of the day has ceased to exist. You can easily test that. For at least 12 of the 20 years during which I have sat in this House, this House would gladly have turned out the Ministry of the day; but it took no steps to do so, knowing that it could not do so if it tried. The fact must be admitted then, though the reasons may not be those that I have stated, that virtue has gone out from this House. On the other hand, we cannot help seeing that the other House has greatly increased in power. It has lost no opportunity of strengthening itself, while we have sat with folded hands and watched the result.

You may think that the arguments that I have brought forward, if they lead to anything, lead to a Single Chamber. But I do not think so. It is not necessary for me to attempt to convince this House of the necessity of a Second Chamber. There are three arguments which I have always thought conclusive as showing the necessity of a Second Chamber, two of which are personal. When the ablest men that America ever knew, a century ago, framed their Constitution, though fettered by no rules and no traditions, and having a clean slate before them, they thought it necessary to construct the strongest Second Chamber the world has ever known. Then let us call to mind the opinion of one who was not an aristocrat by Party or profession—Cromwell—who abolished the House of Lords.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: And the House of Commons.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: But he found it necessary to restore the House of Commons, and, as a consequence, he also found it necessary to restore the House of Lords. The last words he addressed to Parliament were these—

> "I did tell you that I would not undertake such a Government as this unless there might be some other persons that might interpose between me and the House of Commons who had the power to prevent tumultuary and popular spirits."

Cromwell was not an aristocrat, and his Executive was not distinguished by weakness; and the fact that he found it necessary to restore a Second Chamber speaks volumes as to the necessity of a Second Chamber. The third reason in favour of a Second Chamber was given by a great philosopher, whom some of us remember among us—John Stuart Mill—who sums up the argument in a single sentence. He says—

> "The same reasons that induced the Romans to have two Consuls make it desirable that there should be two Chambers, so that neither of them may be exposed to the corrupting influence of undisputed power, even for a single year."

The recent changes in the procedure of the House of Commons also, I think, immeasurably strengthen the arguments for a Second Chamber.

I come now to the Amendment of my noble Friend on the Cross Benches (the Earl of Wemyss), which contains two propositions, with one of which I cordially agree. I agree entirely with the noble Earl that the proper way in which to introduce a measure for the reform of this House is by a measure introduced by Her Majesty's responsible Advisers; but I entirely disagree with the noble Earl when he says that it is not consistent with the dignity of this House to place the question of its constitution in the power of a Committee of your Lordships. There are only two Committees to which this House can with dignity entrust the question of its own constitution, the one being the Committee of this House which I propose, and the other being that Committee of the Privy Council, which is commonly known as the Cabinet. I should prefer greatly the latter of these two Committees; but, no choice being given to me, I am obliged to propose the former. If you cannot have the Cabinet as a Committee, to whom can you so suitably entrust the subject of the constitution of this House as to a Committee selected from your Lordships? Who can know the interior economy of this House as well as the Peers themselves? Who can so well discuss the desirability of changes? I am rather an advanced reformer, but I do not share the distrust of your Lordships expressed by the noble Earl on the Cross Benches.

But I turn from this proposal, and I come to the proposal of the noble Lord behind me (Lord Stratheden and Campbell). The noble Lord, who is generally independent of Parties in this House, has of late been working, in view of this Motion, with singular zeal at the question of the reform of this House, but, if I may say so, with a somewhat limited scope. I hope my noble Friend will not think me disrespectful if I say that his recent efforts have reminded me of a distressed mariner baling out a water-logged ship with a thimble or a spoon. But if my noble Friend on the Cross Benches rejects altogether the idea of a Committee as an inadequate and revolutionary proposal, what does he say to my noble Friend behind who recommends a Royal Commission? I do not know why my noble Friend behind me dislikes a Committee and prefers a Royal Commission—whether it is that he fears that a Committee would not consist of the mystical number of three, or that it might, perhaps, attain to the obnoxious number of five. But the noble Earl, who looks with distrust on a Committee of your Lordships, must view with actual horror the idea of a Royal Commission, not composed entirely or even mainly of Peers, but composed of all sorts and conditions of men, unaccustomed to the refined and rarefied atmosphere of this House, unaccustomed to our delicate traditions, who with rude and incautious hand might probe all the tender and susceptible places in the body politic of this House.

But I must leave the two noble Lords to settle their differences between themselves. I do not share in the distrust and suspicion of your Lordships' House in which they unite, and that is why I propose a Committee on this occasion. I have proposed a Committee as a sort of compromise between what I wish and what I do not wish. What I wish is that the Government should take up the matter; but what I deprecate, failing that, is that an individual should undertake the task, because I firmly believe that there is no individual in this House, out of an official position, of sufficient weight and authority to carry the matter to any satisfactory conclusion. We must also remember another circumstance. We have constantly to remind Members of the House of Commons, when they express wishes for the reform of this House, that any project of reform which does not partake of the character of a revolution must be cast in the form of a Bill passed through both Chambers. Now, I venture to think that no Bill brought in by an individual would go down to the other House with the weight and authority required to insure its success; but that a Bill based on the Report of a Committee of your Lordships—by which, by the way, you would not be bound—that a measure founded upon such a Report could not fail to have value both in the eyes of this House and in the eyes of the House of Commons, and must, at any rate, have valuable results.

The Committee would further have before it all the plans for reform now or about to be brought before the country, two or three of which I may mention. There is the plan of my noble Friend opposite (the Earl of Dunraven), which we fancied at one moment had been communicated to a News Agency, a rumour which he has disclaimed almost with passion. Then there is the project laid before the other House by a highly-respected Member, Mr. Rathbone. There is much to be said for his project; but it is open to some almost fatal criticism. He recommends that 114 Chairmen of County Boards should be admitted to sit in this House. Now I do not object to the principle, but I say that the Chairmen of County Boards would be much better employed in the Chairs of their Boards than here. The County Boards—which, by the way, are not yet in existence, but of which, I believe, Her Majesty's Government is at this moment in course of parturition "elsewhere"—the County Boards would choose their Chairmen on one of two principles. They would either choose them for their local knowledge and administrative capacity—in which case they would wish to have them in their Chairs—or they would choose them as delegates or representatives in this House, in which case they had much better not be Chairmen.

But, passing from that, I would call attention to a plan—or rather speech—attributed to a noble Friend of mine (the Earl of Pembroke). The plan attributed to him is simply that a sufficient number of Life Peers should be created and added to this House. Now, I venture to think that such a measure of reform as that would rather increase the evil than diminish it. If the number of the new Life Peers were small, they would not suffice to leaven this House; if, on the other hand, they were extremely numerous, they would increase what was already a very great evil—namely, the unwieldy bulk of the House. Then I should not like to put the temptation of a very large increase of Peers within reach of the noble Marquess opposite. He already scatters Peerage over a smiling land, and reads his history in the smiles of a considerable number of supporters; and if he had the power to recommend to the Crown the immediate creation of a large number of Life Peerages, I am afraid that the result might be that we should have to adjourn for our deliberations to Westminster Hall or Trafalgar Square. Even if these Life Peers are to be persons eminent in literature, science, and art, the addition would not be an adequate measure. A mere zoological collection of abstract celebrities would not be sufficient for the reformers of this House. We admire greatly the wonders of science, art, and literature; but I venture to think that the men of genius who produce them would not suffice for the purpose of strengthening this House in the manner in which it ought to be strengthened. Nor would the mere addition of Life Peers, whatever the number, have the effect of accomplishing what is one of the principal objects of all reforms—namely, the exclusion of unworthy Members from your House. Therefore, I think you may summarize the results of this proposal thus—it might have been sufficient in 1856 or 1869, but it will not be sufficient in 1888. It will not content those who desire a large reform of your Lordships' House, nor will it please those other two sections: those who desire no reform at all and those who desire the abolition of the House—two sections which, although starting from different points of view, seem to me to arrive at substantially the same goal. The mere addition of Life Peers will not be adequate for your purpose. I go even further, and say that it will do you injury rather than good. We must try to lay broader and deeper foundations; and I now come to the main point for our consideration—namely, what are the real principles on which the reform of this House should proceed?

I may make one remark at once with regard to those principles, and say that we possess at this moment an ideal Second Chamber. We make no use of it, but we possess it. It is one of the splendid but deserted halls of the palace of the Constitution. I refer to the Privy Council, which has many of the attributes of the ancient Roman Senate, and which comprises in its lists almost every eminent politician in the country. Were you to take the Privy Council for your Second Chamber, you would have in it an enormous delegation from this House, for out of 211 Members no less than 109 are Peers. There is something curious about these figures. The attendances at the House of Lords during an average Session has been supplied to me. During the Session of 1885 the average attendance at this House was exactly 110. So if you took the Privy Council for a Second Chamber you would not merely have the Members of the two Houses within it, but you would have almost exactly the same average attendance of Peers that you have now.

But I discard all idea of such a Second Chamber for two reasons. First, there is nothing to prevent the Privy Council being flooded to any extent; there is just the same objection to the Privy Council that there is to an unlimited addition of Life Peers. A Privy Councillor would be a Life Peer, neither more nor less; and the Privy Council would be in no degree guarded against unbounded incursions. There is the further objection that it would involve the abolition of this House. I discard any idea of utilizing the Privy Council in that way, because of these two reasons; and the second of the two conducts me to the first principle which should guide any great reform of this House. This is that it is a cardinal principle of English politics that you should respect old names and old traditions. The whole course of the legislation of this country consists in pouring the newest wine into the oldest bottles. Although that has been said to be impossible, it has been attended in this country with excellent results. An illustration will show how wise and necessary it is to respect ancient names. In 1874 a great Conservative Lord Chancellor, Lord Cairns, abolished the appellate jurisdiction of this House, and transferred it to another tribunal. In 1874 and 1875 there were such marked proofs of discontent both in Scotland and Ireland—the countries mainly affected—that it was found necessary in 1876 to restore to this House, at least in name, its appellate jurisdiction. Was it done by simple restoration? Nothing of the kind. It was done by adding to the House three Judges—three Life Peers—possibly the same three Judges before whom the same cases would have devolved under the former measure. The three Judges were to sit in this House, and were to assist the ex-Lord Chancellors in acting as an appellate tribunal. It was really little more than saying that a new Court should sit inside these walls; and in order to attain this result we accepted a principle we had hitherto rejected—the principle of Life Peers; and the country was entirely satisfied with that compromise. That guides me to the conclusion that any reform of the House of Lords should respect the name of the House of Lords, and that any reconstructed House of Lords should consist of some of the Peers, and that those Members who were not Peers should be called Lords of Parliament.

The next principles I come to are those of delegation and of election. I believe that these principles are necessary, first, in order to keep the House of a manageable size, and to give a sense of personal responsibility to its Members. Secondly, it is necessary to exclude Peers who prove themselves to be unfit or unworthy to be legislators. Thirdly, it is necessary to obtain a popular basis. And, fourthly, it is necessary to prevent stagnation by keeping free and unimpeded a constant succession of new Members, of Members having received new mandates, in this House.

How are we to apply these principles? First, it is perfectly clear that if they were thoroughly applied, in future none but Peers of the Blood Royal, who are in a wholly exceptional position, would sit in this House by the mere title of hereditary descent. Next, I venture to think that the less than 70 Irish Peers, and the less than 20 Scottish Peers, who have no seats in this House, although in other respects they have the privilege of the Peerage, should be added to the great body of the Peers in this House, which they would not largely swell; and that body so constituted should delegate a certain number of Members to sit for a limited period as Representative Peers in this House. Of course, in such a system we should need the minority vote, or else I and my noble Friends behind me would entirely disappear—a result I should greatly deplore.

But this would not give the House the external strength, the outward buttress, which, if I am right in my apprehensions, this House so greatly needs. To do that you must have a mandate from the nation, a representative element elected by the nation itself. Your Lordships may say now you represent the nation to a large extent; but I should wish a reformed House to have some clearer certificate of the fact. I think you would require to have in your reconstructed House a large infusion of elected Peers—elected either by the future County Boards or by the larger Municipalities, or even by the House of Commons, or by all three. I go into no details; but in that way you would have the elective principle introduced as gradually and as safely as you may choose, in what degree you choose, in what measure you may select; you would have a large basis for compromise and arrangement; you could control the number according to your wishes; you could obtain by election an infusion as large or as small as you please of the popular external element. In the last place, you would exclude, without invidiousness and without difficulty, unfit and unworthy Peers. It is not now a question of how much or how little, how many or how few. If it were the noble Marquess opposite who was addressing you it might be a question of how few or how many; but at this moment it is a question merely of framework; and I venture to think that on that framework you can raise as large or as small a superstructure as you please. Then there is the obvious principle of life and official Peerages, which I think in themselves alone are insufficient and objectionable, but which would naturally form a valuable element in a reformed House. The fifth principle I should lay down is that the proportions of these various elements should be fixed, or their numbers should be fixed, because, otherwise, you would not achieve an important part of the object of your reform.

One further element I should like to see included. I know the dislike of all practical politicians for what are termed fancy franchises; but I feel there would be great and important advantages in inviting the great self-governing Colonies to send their Agents General or Representatives delegated for that purpose to sit, under certain conditions, in your Lordships' House.

Such a scheme, such a principle, if carried out in practice, would involve the necessity of the Government of the day being able to nominate, for the duration of their existence, some official or representative, who should bear the task of representing them in this House, if they were not otherwise represented. These are the sound principles, in my opinion, on which such a reform should moment. But there are two general principles of a more negative character which seem to me of equally vital moment. The first is connected with the argument which the noble Marquess opposite brought forward with great force in his speech at Oxford. It was the argument that any increase of the power of the House of Lords must be at the expense of the power of the House of Commons, and that the House of Commons naturally would not be friendly to such an arrangement. That line of argument seems to me to imply two fallacies. It seems to me to lay down a principle, which I cannot admit, that there is only a limited amount of legislative and political strength in the country; and, in the next place, to make a certain confusion between power and efficiency. I can imagine the case of a State possessing a great feudal castle—such as Berkeley, or Bracciano, or Chateau Gaillard—suddenly throwing up earthworks around it and arming it with all the resources of modern artillery, and so causing uneasiness and mistrust to neighbours who cherished an interesting relic, but feared a menace of war. That is one case; but the other is that of the owner of such a Castle afraid to renew the roof of the walls, cowering under its decayed shelter, afraid to protect himself against the coming storm and the pitiless hurricane, and allowing his old tower to fall about his ears lest his comfort should excite jealousy among his neighbours. Well, my Lords, I venture to think that this exposes a distinction which I wish to draw between rendering the House efficient and able for its duties, and rendering it too powerful for the friendly companionship of the other House of Parliament.

But the noble Marquess's argument is perfectly true to this extent—that if this House acquired great powers, and at the same time acquired limited numbers and a tenure of fixed duration, it would become a much more difficult House to deal with than at present; it would, indeed, disturb the balance of the Constitution, and from being an almost unalterable Chamber would become a hard calculus in the body politic. We must further remember this—that in the words unalterable and fixed there lies a great Constitutional disarrangement; because, as I have already ventured to point out, the power by the Crown of creating as many Peers as the Crown may think fit is the sole method of bringing the two Houses to an accommodation on a question on which they are at issue. Therefore, if you had a new House, and limited the numbers of that House, you would have to find some other Constitutional arrangement to bring the two Houses into harmony.

My Lords, I believe we could do this by simply retracing our steps, and going back on the ancient lines of the Constitution. The real mother of Parliaments is the *Magnum Concilium*, the Great Council, which in the reigns of the Edwards divided itself into two and nearly into three, and became a House of Lords and a House of Commons; and I think that under certain guarantees it might be provided in any scheme of reform that the two Houses should meet together and form one body, and by certain fixed majorities carry or reject a measure which has been in dispute between them. This, of course, would be impossible with an unrestricted hereditary House; but it would be possible with a restricted Senate.

My Lords, there is another way of getting over the difficulty, which, I think, has been put forward by Mr. Bright; but I am not sure. It is that after a measure has been passed once or twice by the House of Commons and rejected once or twice by your Lordships, the House of Commons, shall be enabled, in the language of diplomacy, to *passer outre*, and proceed with the measure as if it had met with no opposition from your Lordships, and so override the ruling of this House. My objection to that is this—In the first place it would involve great waste of time, because if you passed your Bills by the ordinary Constitutional methods, the House of Commons would be constantly employed in discussing at great length measures which they knew by the very principle of the proposal the House of Lords would be obliged to reject; whereas if you abbreviate your proceedings, and allow the House of Commons to discharge its measures at you, after short intervals, like the chambers of a revolver, you would do away with the position of this House as a Second Chamber at all, and reduce it to a second-rate Court of Revision or a Debating Society.

My Lords, I pass from that topic, which is an important one, because it contains an obvious Constitutional objection to all possible reform. I pass to one large principle which is also vital to the House of Lords and its future reform—because I take reform to be inevitable, if not to-day if the House of Lords proceeds to reform, which includes the principle of delegation, what is to be done with the Peers who have been excluded? For it is well known to your Lordships that if, like the Roman Senate, we are Conscript Fathers, it is because we are brought together rather by the involuntary process of conscription than by the principle of voluntary action. Would those excluded Peers be like the Scottish Peer who are not elected, and who are by that fact disabled from all mixture in public life, or would they be like the Irish Peers, who, although debarred from the constituencies of their native country, are at liberty to roam unrestricted through the boroughs and counties of this Island? Well, my Lords, I think a broad principle might be laid down—it seems to me that any person should be free to accept or refuse a writ of summons to this House, and that having either so refused or not having received a summons to this House, such a Peer should be as free to be elected to the other House of the Legislature as any other subject of the Queen. My Lords, there is one obvious exception to this, and that is that any person voluntarily accepting an hereditary patent of Peerage would by such a process be spontaneously excluding himself from that process by which the others, on the hypothesis I have mentioned, would be endeavouring to free themselves. My Lords, we have a very curious case which bears on this question of the necessity of Peers sitting in this House There was a mysterious personage, Viscount Purbeck, a connection of the noble Earl, who defeated the Government in the House the other night; and I may here notice one of our minor disadvantages, which is that if we want to designate each other we are placed at the hopeless disadvantage of having to go back to biographical and geographical details of a singularly involved and prolix character. I say that this nobleman, a relative of the noble Earl, endeavoured at the time of the Restoration to disembarrass himself of his Peerage. He was found sitting for the borough of Malmesbury, and the eye of the Executive was at once fixed upon him, and he was summoned to this House. He fought a gallant fight, because even under the Republican rule of Cromwell he had been disabled from sitting in the House of Commons; but after that he managed to get back again, and after a very severe legal contest he was again excluded; and I believe there was a Resolution in his case, the Resolution of 1678, which re-affirmed that of 1640, which affirms the impossibility of a Peer divesting himself of his Peerage. The Resolution in the latter case is less technical, and it was that no Peer of this Realm can drown or extinguish his honour, but that it descends unto his descendants, neither by surrender, grant, fine, nor any other conveyance; and what I venture to deduce from that gallant struggle closed by that Resolution is this—that what the House of Lords was competent on a former occasion to deny by such a Resolution, the House of Lords by a Resolution in this case is equally competent to affirm.

I thank you most warmly for the attention with which you have listened to me. I have detained you at great length, and I fear I have touched on subjects which must have been unpalatable. My Lords, I have only one last word to speak to you, but it is a golden one—it is the word "opportunity." This question is no Party question; at any rate I have most sincerely endeavoured, as far as was possible, to keep it outside Party lines. I have canvassed no Member of your Lordships' House; I have not asked a single Peer to give his vote in my support. But, indeed, it is not possible for me or any other Member of your Lordships' House to make it a Party question at this juncture, even if we so wished. It is not I or those who think with me—it is not we alone, but it is the Conservative Party, both in the House of Commons and in the country, that are asking your Lordships to be up and doing. It is only your enemies that would have you be still. But the opportunity, my Lords of the Government, is with you; you have a chance which may not occur again in this generation; you have in the one House a majority of not less than 100; you have almost the unanimous support of the other; you have, besides, the supreme advantage of a political calm, for although reform is in the air there is no agitation in its behalf to which you might deem it undignified or pusillanimous to yield. Such a chance, my Lords, rarely occurs, and when it has passed by is not apt to occur again. Reject my Motion if you will, but, at any rate, act yourselves.

"Miss not the occasion; by the forelock take
That subtle power, the never-halting Time,
Lest a mere moment's putting off should make
Mischance almost as heavy as a crime."

My Lords, there is one argument which will be brought against me to-night, which is brought forward publicly and privately, and which, I confess, has great weight. They say it is not possible to introduce sudden reforms in an ancient country, and they follow that up by the analogy that if you roughly or rudely touch an ancient building, even for purposes of repair, it is apt to fall about your ears. My Lords, I venture to say in reply to that argument that no remodelling would come suddenly upon the country, and that no reform in this House, however radical it might be, would anticipate the just expectations of the people. And as for the analogy of the old building, I would venture to say this—that if the old building be sound it will safely stand repair; if the building be so unsound that it will not stand handling, in God's name let it be so certified and declared. In truth, my Lords, the frequent reconstructions of the House of Commons leave you no choice as to undertaking some measure of reform. Thrice n the last 60 years the House of Commons has dug new foundations for itself, and each time it has dug them broader and deeper, each time it has received an immeasurable accession of strength, and in the meantime we have remained practically as we were at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries. My Lords, such a position as this is not wise; it is not politic; it is not secure; it is not even tenable; it is better frankly to admit to ourselves and the world that, both in principle and in practice, we need great reform and great reconstruction. Frankness, my Lords, indeed, on such an occasion is neither a merit nor a demerit in a person who thinks as I do; it is an absolute matter of duty, and reticence would be little better than a crime. I therefore implore you, my Lords, and chiefly your Lordships who are privileged to be in the Government, not to neglect this opportunity, so marvellous if we look at the past, so bountiful if we regard the immediate future—this opportunity, by wise and by timely legislation, to repair, renovate, and to reconstruct the authority and usefulness of this immemorial Chamber. I beg, my Lords, to move the Motion which stands in my name.

Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the constitution of this House."—(*The Earl of Rosebery.*)

THE EARL OF WEMYSS said, he would ask the kind indulgence of their Lordships while he moved, as an Amendment to the noble Earl's Motion—

"That it is not a safe thing to place the constitution of this House in the power of a Committee, nor consistent with its dignity to discuss before a Committee the reason for its existence; and if any changes in the constitution of this House are wanted they should be debated and made by the House itself on the motion of the responsible Ministers of the Crown."

For this Amendment he confidently looked to receive the support of both sides of their Lordships' House. This might naturally appear somewhat sanguine on his part; but when he explained the origin of his Motion, he thought their Lordships would be of the opinion that he was justified in his anticipation of receiving general support. *Non meus hic sermo.* The first part of the Amendment was taken absolutely *verbatim* from an admirable speech made by his noble Friend who sat on the Front Opposition Bench, and who, in the absence of the recognized Leader on that side, ably and effectively filled his place —he meant the Earl of Kimberley; while the latter part was taken, *verbatim* also, from the speech of even a more distinguished Member of their Lordships' House, the present Prime Minister. Therefore it was not unreasonable to hope that he might receive the support of both sides. In placing his Amendment before their Lordships, he could not hope to present it to their Lordships with the ability and eloquence with which his noble Friend had brought his Resolution before them; and he further laboured under the disadvantage, as compared with the noble Earl who introduced the subject, that he had not been long a Member of the House. He came late into it, and rejoiced that it was so; but he was for something like 41 years a Member of the other House of Parliament, in which his noble Friend never had a seat, and in the consideration of great questions affecting the constitution of the two Houses of Parliament it was desirable to draw some comparison between the two as Deliberative and Legislative Chambers. Now, he was prepared to stand up and say, after a long experience of "another place," that in its deliberative and legislative capacity this House not unfavourably compared with the other House of Parliament. His noble Friend had brought forward his Motion in deference to what he considered to be the strong set of public opinion in favour of the reform of the House of Lords. His noble Friend's political attitude always reminded him of a picture he once saw in the Paris Salon. It represented a beautiful female form gracefully and buoyantly floating towards the admiring spectator on the surface of the advancing tide. It was called "The Wave;" and whoever had followed the political career of his noble Friend could not have failed to observe that he always buoyantly and gracefully floated on the crest of the advancing democratic wave; and not only so, but he kept his weather eye open and looked out for coming waves, which he hoped would in due course bring him safely into port. Thus, last week, his noble Friend made a speech in the East End of London, in which he prophesied of Home Rule for Wales and for Scotland.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: No.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS said, perhaps in his reply he would explain what he did mean, for certainly his words meant that or nothing at all. He also in that speech held out the hope to all leaseholders of London that by a beneficent Act of Parliament each householder was to be put in possession of his house in fee. When he read this passage in his noble Friend's speech, he could not help reflecting that the Governor General elect of India, when he, too, read it in Canada, must rejoice that his noble Friend, his late tenant, had migrated, or was about to migrate, from Lansdowne House to another part of Berkeley Square. But his noble Friend's tidal almanack was not always correct. Two years ago he thought he had taken the tide of Home Rule at the flood. He had found it at the ebb, and now he sat there high and dry on the shoal of Opposition. And now it was not too clear that his noble Friend was right in believing that there was a great tidal wave in favour of reform of their Lordships' House. At any rate, if there was, they must gauge its strength; and he ventured to say without hesitation that if there was any feeling anywhere in favour of reform of their Lordships' House, it should be gauged not by clever articles in reviews and newspapers, elaborating new constitutions for their Lordships' House, but by the views of the Radical section of the other House of Parliament, who did not look to reforming and strengthening the House of Lords, but practically to its abolition. The Radicals wished to see this House exist simply for correcting the drafting of the Bills that came up from the House of Commons, and as a Chamber in which to register the edicts of an uncontrolled democracy. In the recent debate on the House of Lords in "another place" this had been distinctly said. They really wanted to get rid of what was called a Second Chamber. Now, as to the question of a Second Chamber, he was not going to argue in the abstract in defence of the principle of a Second Chamber; he was content to let it rest on the *dictum* of the present

Prime Minister, who, in the debate on the House of Lords four years ago, said that no one but a madman would be in favour of doing away with a Second Chamber. He also said that the House of Lords was the best Second Chamber in the world with the exception of the Senate of the United States. Of the American Senate and Constitution, he would only say that we, unhappily, in this country, found ourselves in this position—that we were landed in democracy without the safeguard of a body such as the American Senate, and without the further safeguard of such a body as the Supreme Court, and one might be perfectly certain that the confiscation and the injustice that had been going on in this country for the last 18 years never could have taken place in the United States, in consequence of the security afforded by the Senate and the Supreme Court. But did the Members of the House of Commons who wanted the House of Lords reformed wish to establish anything like the American Senate or the Supreme Court? Nothing of the kind; that was the very last thing they desired. It was with them a question practically of getting rid of the House of Lords. He would then, leaving the abstract question of a Second Chamber, say a word as to the value of the House of Lords as a judicial, deliberative, and legislative Body, and as a check upon rash and ill-considered legislation. He was glad to hear his noble Friend refer to the restoration of the appellate jurisdiction of the House of Lords. Although it was an incidental matter, he thought it right to mention that this restoration was mainly due to the action of a dear friend of his, the late Right Hon. James Stuart-Wortley, who got a Committee together of men of all shades of politics, that met at his house, and managed to focus the discontent and feeling aroused by the abolition of the appellate jurisdiction of the Lords, and thus, by showing the unanimity of feeling on the other side, he led the way to its restoration. He would not dwell upon the way in which their judicial functions were performed in that House; it would be mere impertinence to do so; he would rather say a few words upon their deliberative and legislative action. And here it would be well to draw a moral from the story of Samson, and remember how he sent foxes into the Philistines' corn. No defence was sound without attack, and he should venture, in speaking of their Lordships' House, to send a few foxes into the Philistines' corn in "another place." First, with regard to debating power, he was old enough to recollect such giants of debate as Lord Brougham, Lord Ellenborough, Lord Lyndhurst, and the late Lord Derby—those giants of the House of Lords compared, to say the least, not unfavourably with the speakers in "another place." With regard to the present time, it would, of course, be invidious to particularize; but he thought there were Members of their Lordships' House who were able to hold their own in debate against any old—or young—man eloquent in the House of Commons. But what struck one coming from "another place" was not so much the eloquence and debating power of their Lordships' House as their reticence. He heard complaints of Members of their Lordships' House who did not attend their debates, and who never spoke; but that was the great merit of that House—they did their work without talking. He did not believe that any Assembly in the world bestowed more careful consideration upon Bills, but they did not waste time in needless talk. As M. Taine had said of them—"They sat there in their chimney pot hats and did their Business—they were not makers of phrases." When they spoke they did not speak for their local newspapers or to constituents. It was their inner and not their outer man that spoke. But, whatever were the merits or demerits of their Lordships' House, they could, at least, say that by no abuse of language had that House had the gag applied to it, and by no abuse of its Forms of Procedure had it had to be put in irons, and he ventured to think that in their legislative and deliberative capacity they might favourably compare with the other House of Parliament. As to the question of how far their Lordships' House was a check, the noble Earl had told them that they were apt to strain at a Liberal gnat, and swallow a Conservative camel; but what they actually did was to take their stand against Liberal gnats until they were certain that it was necessary and desirable that measures, at first, perhaps, unimportant, should be passed by the general consent of both Houses of Parliament. They exercised what he believed was a judicious check when it was uncertain whether public opinion was sufficiently formed upon a subject. If the proposals of the noble Earl were carried out, the case would be exactly the same, and the House would have to yield to public opinion when clearly manifested. But they were told that however excellent might be their Lordships' House, and however admirable their deliberative and legislative power, it required to be reformed, and many suggestions had been made upon the subject. The first class of reformers were those who talked of the mending or ending of that House; but there could be little doubt that ending was the end of all this so-called mending. That had been clearly shown not long ago in "another place," where a Motion had been brought forward for the abolition of the hereditary principle in the House of Lords. Then they had the system of delegation, as proposed by the noble Earl. But the noble Earl forgot, supposing under a system of delegation a fair proportion of Liberal Peers were to be chosen, what guarantee could be given that they would remain Liberals? His noble Friend complained of the relative inequality of the two sides of the House, but whose fault was it? It was simply because they brought in bad measures, such as Home Rule, for which their own Friends could not vote. He doubted whether it would be possible to set down a satisfactory system of delegation in black and white. The noble Earl had cited in favour of the delegate principle the election of Scotch Peers. But surely the noble Earl knew that if there was one thing that they heard more about than another in regard to this matter, it was that the Scotch Peers were mainly Tories, and that they returned nothing but Tories, and that a Liberal Peer had not a chance. Then there was a proposal that the Chairmen of County Boards should have seats; but he agreed with the noble Earl that Chairmen of County Boards would be better employed in looking after their Boards than in legislating in that House, and no man could be in two places at once. There was also the question of Life Peers. For his own part, he would like to see the principle extended, and he thought that each political Party might choose an equal limited number. Of course, it would be impossible to prevent the Liberal Peers turning round; but it would, at all events, be a fair start. He should like to see commerce, trade, industry, arts, arms, and science represented, though he might add, with reference to a highly imaginative paragraph which had appeared in some newspapers as to his having recently attended a celebrated prize fight in France, that when he said he was in favour of the representation of science, he did not wish to give such a wide interpretation to the word "science" as to include professors of self-defence. He agreed, also, that it was desirable that in their Lordships' House the Agents General of our Colonies, or something equivalent to the Agents General, should have seats. He thought, also, that the Dissenting Bodies should have Representatives in that House; and that, extending the principle of the exclusion of bankrupt Peers, those who had dishonoured their names should, if possible, also be debarred from voting and taking part in their deliberations. The question, however, before them was as to the mode of proceeding. His noble Friend would proceed by Committee, a course condemned by the two noble Lords whose words he had, as already explained, embodied in his Amendment. The only sound way of dealing with the question was that their Lordships should not let it out of their own hands. Using words which appeared in the 999th letter—he was not sure as to the exact number—which recently appeared in the papers from "an old Parliamentary hand," he would say to their Lordships—"Beware of traps;" beware of the trap of a Select Committee; beware of the trap of a Royal Commission; beware of the trap of a Bill drawn up by a private Member of their Lordships' House, a noble Friend of his, who, being of an active turn of mind, and having, like a frozen-out gardener, no work to do, had taken upon himself to frame a new constitution for their Lordships' House. If they were to have a reform, let it be a reform well considered, well digested, and brought in on the responsibility of the responsible Government of the day. It was because he felt this very strongly that he had put down the Amendment which stood in his name, and he thought he should receive support from Members on both sides. But we lived in times of great, sudden, and unexpected changes. He would not enter into these changes—he did not wish to make himself disagreeable to his noble Friends on the Front Opposition Bench, because he looked to getting their support. But unquestionably there had been of late years great and sudden changes. No greater, no more sudden change on the part of public men had taken place than the change upon this question in the House of Commons, made by the Liberal Party under the guidance of Sir William Harcourt. It was a change so sudden that Lord Hartington got up in his place and said he would not have risen but for the new and somewhat unexpected attitude taken up by the right hon. Member for Newcastle, and he assumed the right hon. Gentleman's statement to be the official utterance of the official Opposition. In consequence of that new departure they had had a great advance in the speech of his noble Friend upon the speech which he made four years ago, and now his noble Friends on his right might possibly follow the lead of that apostle of change, Sir William Harcourt, who now did things by halves, and was always as enthusiastic in any new part he adopted as the celebrated actor who, when he played "Othello," invariably blacked himself all over. Under the guidance of the right hon. Gentleman some of his noble Friends on the Opposition Benches might possibly turn their backs on themselves and on the views they had held four years ago. But, be that as it might, the course their Lordships should follow was clear—they should make what changes were reasonable, Constitutional, and consistent with the ancient character of their Lordships' House; and, having done so on the responsibility and advice of Her Majesty's Government, let them then boldly take their stand and wait calmly for what the future might bring forth. Let them do so strong in six centuries of prescriptive right, strong in the noble traditions of their ancient House, strong in the record of noble lives, strong in the good work they had done, strong, too, in the affection for the Constitution which was still a living principle in the heart of the British nation. And let them always remember that weak concessions never saved, and that, alike for institutions and for men, it was better, at the worst, to nobly die than ignobly live. The noble Earl concluded by moving the Amendment which stood in his name.

Amendment *moved*,

To leave out all the words after ("That") for the purpose of inserting the following Resolution—namely, ("it is not a safe thing to place the constitution of this House in the power of a Committee, nor consistent with its dignity to discuss before a Committee the reason for its existence; and if any changes in the constitution of this House are wanted they should be debated and made by the House itself on the motion of the responsible Ministers of the Crown.")—(*The Earl of Wemyss.*)

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN said, that on the general subject of the propositions shadowed forth by his noble Friend opposite he did not propose to enter at any great length. Those of their Lordships who were aware of his opinions on the subject, either from hearing him in that House or from reading what he had written in the Press at the beginning of the Session or in magazines some four or five years ago, would be aware that to a great deal of what his noble Friend (the Earl of Rosebery) said he could give a cordial approval. How far he could almost entirely agree with his noble Friend it was impossible for him to say, because from the remarkable speech which his noble Friend made he failed to gather a very clear and distinct idea of the scope and effect of his proposals. He did not gather how far they might interfere with the existing privileges or existing life interests of their Lordships. The noble Earl on the Cross Benches, proceeding by a process of elimination, referred to a scheme which was attributed to him by the Central News. If any of their Lordships had in mind any scheme by which the efficiency of Parliament could be increased and made more fit for dealing with the great complications of the social and political problems which might be submitted to their Lordships, he was of opinion that they could be scarcely better employed than by endeavouring to place it before the House in a comprehensive and distinct form. The noble Earl objected to the constitution of their Lordships' House being submitted to a Select Committee, and in that he entirely agreed with him. It appeared to him that to submit such a far-reaching question as this to a Committee would be an improper way of dealing with the subject, and would be scarcely paying due deference to the dignity of the House or to the issues involved. If a Select Committee were appointed and did not report in favour of any of the propositions of the noble Earl, or did not report any distinct plan to the House, their Lordships would be in this position—namely, that they would have admitted that there was something wrong, but that there was no remedy. They would practically admit that the condition of the House was that of sickness unto death. The usual practice was to appoint a Committee to search out and ascertain the legal aspect of a case, and to report to the House as to the details involved in some great principle to which the House had given its general assent. But in this case the House would not have given its assent to any distinct principle. It would be referring matters to a Select Committee which, if placed before the House in a distinct form, might very probably be rejected. He thought that would be proceeding in a very unusual and unbusinesslike manner. In dealing with a great question such as this it was essential that a perfectly clear and distinct proposition should be laid before the House. It seemed to him due to the dignity of that House to take that course. Parliament was, after all, a machine for conducting the Business of the United Kingdom and of the Empire. If it was considered that alterations in the machine were necessary, that modern improvements should be introduced to enable it to deal better with modern complexities and difficulties, surely it was necessary to draw up a distinct plan which Parliament could look at and examine carefully before committing itself to any abstract proposition as to the necessity of alteration or reform? That could be done either by a distinct Resolution or by means of a Bill. Resolutions had the advantage that they were a comparatively easy form of proceeding; and, moreover, there would be no great difficulty in drawing up a Resolution dealing, somewhat abstractedly perhaps, with the various alterations it was proposed to introduce in the constitution of the House. A Bill, on the other hand, was a much more difficult matter, but nevertheless recommended itself to him as the best method whereby so great a question as this could be introduced to the attention of Parliament. The mere process of drafting a Bill had a very searching effect on the individual doing so. The great thing to aim at was to crystallize vague ideas, to bring abstract Resolutions within the four corners of a Bill, to produce distinct and clear propositions in writing, and to submit them to the still more searching criticism of print. He had listened with great attention to the speech of the noble Earl opposite—a speech of enormous value as well as from an historical point of view as from an academical aspect; but he did not gather himself—and he did not think the majority of their Lordships would have gathered—from that speech an idea sufficiently clear, concrete, and distinct of what the noble Earl proposed to justify the House in referring the matter to a Select Committee. What were the reforms to be? He could understand the distinct proposal to make the Agents General of the Colonies Lords of Parliament for a certain time. Such a proposal as that might be referred to a Select Committee with great advantage; but that was the only distinct and clear proposition placed before the House in the speech of the noble Earl. Therefore, he failed to see how it was possible to refer so vague a matter to a Select Committee. As to the second part of his noble Friend's Amendment, he could not agree with it. He thought it would be very injurious to preclude any Member of the House, not being a Cabinet Minister, from discussing this question of the reform of the constitution of the House. In fact, it appeared to him undesirable that the question should be brought forward by a Minister. It was certainly not advisable that Ministers should go ahead of public opinion, or place themselves in a position that might produce anything in the nature of a conflict between the two branches of the Legislature. He objected strongly to having their Lordships' mouths closed and completely gagged in this matter. There was one point in which he cordially agreed with his noble Friend who introduced the subject, and that was the opportuneness of the present moment. If it was right to consider the necessity of making alterations in the constitution of the House, it was essential that those alterations should be discussed impartially, and at a time when public opinion had not been fictitiously raised against the

House of Lords. Their Lordships would bear in mind that events would shortly happen which would practically change the constitution of the other branch of the Legislature. The Government were that night introducing the Local Government Bill, by which a great deal of the Business which now occupied the House of Commons would devolve upon the counties. Probably in course of time the Irish Question in its present phase would disappear. In that case the House of Commons would be able to direct its attention to many great questions with which it was now precluded from dealing; and it was very essential, if Parliament was to be an official machine to conduct the Business of the country, and to carry out the wishes of the people, that some alterations should be made in the constitution of the House of Lords to enable it to keep touch with the other branch of the Legislature. His noble Friend opposite had pointed out that he (the Earl of Dunraven) had given a somewhat similar but more distinct Notice of Motion. He had intended to ask the House to declare that in its opinion alterations in its constitution were desirable and necessary. That Motion he withdrew; and on consideration with friends, and especially on refreshing his memory as to the debate that took place nearly four years ago, he came to the conclusion that the general view of the House would be that the proceeding by way of a Bill would bring forward distinct, clear, and crystallized propositions, and would be the method in which the House would prefer that the matter should be brought forward. He intended to introduce his Bill on Thursday next, and this would give their Lordships all the Easter Recess to consider his proposals. Owing to the schemes with which he had been fathered by certain newspapers, he had been tempted to make a statement; but to have done so might have seemed discourteous to his noble Friend opposite; and, in the second place, he was unwilling to inflict two speeches on the same subject on their Lordships' House. He should be sorry to appear in the character both of judge and executioner. Believing, as he did, that to refer this matter to a Committee was not the best way of dealing with it, he could not vote for the Motion of his noble Friend; but he hoped that their Lordships would understand clearly that in not voting for the Motion he was by no means expressing disapproval of much that his noble Friend had said. He was in favour of the first half of the noble Earl's Amendment, and he would suggest to him to divide it. For the first half he would be willing to vote; but for the second he could not. As it would be his privilege and duty, when asking their Lordships to give his Bill a second reading, to go largely into this subject, he would not enter into the general subject now.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: As my noble Friend on the Cross Benches has referred pointedly to some remarks of mine made some years ago, I should like to say a few words in explanation. I have not changed my mind as to the general proposition that to refer this matter to a Committee is not the most satisfactory method of proceeding. I see considerable objections to legislation of this kind being referred to a Committee; the best course would be to proceed by way of a Bill brought forward by the Government; but I shall, nevertheless, vote for the Motion of my noble Friend. The noble Earl on the Cross Benches must be well aware that since 1884 very large changes have taken place. The last Reform Bill had not then been passed, and everyone who attends to what takes place in this country must have seen that the desire for a reform of the House of Lords has greatly increased. After grave reflection I am of opinion that we have now arrived at a point when the constitution of this House is such that it cannot long work harmoniously with the other House, and that, notwithstanding the magnitude of the task of reforming this House, it would be far more hazardous for us to do nothing and take our chance of what might occur hereafter. As an old Member of this House, I would not lightly support a Motion for inquiry into the constitution of this House; but I have come to the conclusion that the time has come for reconstructing the House on a new and different basis. The problem of a Second Chamber, I admit, is a most difficult one. It has, no doubt, been solved in the United States, but under conditions so different that we cannot draw any analogy. It has also been solved, to a certain extent, in some of our Colonies. But the difficulty is this

—if you have an Assembly the Members of which are nominated for life, it has not strength enough. If, on the other hand, you have a really strong elected Assembly, you get a deadlock between the two Houses. No reform, I think, will work satisfactorily which does not provide for the settlement of differences that may arise. Different modes have been suggested, such as the requiring a measure to be sent up a second time in a subsequent Session; but I do not think that would be of any avail, for the Members of the Lower House would not, by the mere delay of a year, be induced to change their minds, or you might provide that the two Houses should vote together. I shall not enter into details; but this I will say—that I feel strongly that we cannot any longer rest on the old hereditary principle alone on which this House is based. This is a very grave conclusion, for that principle is so old and so interwoven with the Constitution of the State that to depart from it means, to a great extent, the construction of a new House, and I am bound to admit that I think it would be most difficult to give to any new Chamber the *prestige* and authority which have so long belonged to this House. My noble Friend (the Earl of Wemyss) correctly described this Amendment as meaning that there must be a change in the hereditary character of this House, and in that sense I shall vote for it. I should welcome any intimation from the Government that they are prepared to consider the subject; and in this connection I wish to point out that I have been much influenced by the recent utterances of certain Conservative Members—by the opinion expressed by so distinguished a man as Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, and still more by what was said the other evening by the Leader of the House of Commons. It was an important statement for a person filling the position of Leader of the House of Commons to say that he should be glad to see the question taken up by the House of Lords itself. When I made the observations in 1884 which have been referred to, it must be borne in mind that I was one of the Ministers of the Crown, and that the Government of the day was already engaged upon the reform of the other House. I shall vote for the Motion, understanding it to mean that a large reconstruction of this House is desirable; but, whatever the fate of the Motion may be, I shall welcome any announcement of the noble Marquess that he, on the part of the Government, will undertake to deal with this most important question.

The PRIME MINISTER and SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of Salisbury): No doubt the noble Earl who has just sat down is justified in speaking of this as a grave and important Motion, for what is proposed is nothing less than an entire reconstruction of one of the Houses of the Legislature—a reconstruction, too, of the fashion of which we have hitherto had no experience. The House of Commons has been reformed—reformed again and again; but it has always been reformed upon the basis of its ancient constitution, and upon the theory of that constitution. You are asked now to absolutely deny and cast aside the principles on which this House has always existed, and the basis on which, for 800 years, it has reposed. I listened with great attention to the remarkably able and eloquent speech of the noble Earl opposite. It was very courteous in its reference to myself, and it was not wanting in that fertility of illustration which we are accustomed to at his hands. But I confess it seemed to me to have been a speech which should have been justified by laying upon the Table the measure to which it referred. It was a speech not for an inquiry—it was a speech with a foregone conclusion—foregone conclusions of the widest character, and yet only dimly shadowed out, and left unexplained in that fulness which would enable us to criticize its exact proposals. Upon a question of this kind, do not imagine that you can ride away by saying you can settle details first and principles afterwards. Upon the working of the details depends the actual result of any measure which you may introduce. The noble Earl proposes to refer this question to a Committee; but what Order of Reference does he give to the Committee? They have absolutely none. They are to consider the constitution of this House much as a doctor might be asked to examine the body of some diseased patient carried to the hospital. The only Order of Reference which they could have is the speech of the noble Earl who introduced the

Motion. They must study that speech, and they must find out, from the arguments that he used, and from the considerations on which he dwelt, what are the evils which this Committee is required to examine into, and what is the nature of the remedies which it is expected to recommend. Well, if you consider his speech in that point of view as an Order of Reference to the Committee that we are to appoint, the matter which appeared to me most prominent in his speech, the defect to which he referred the most frequently was that there was an overwhelming majority of this House against the Party to which he has the honour to belong. I do not pretend that one-sidedness in any House of Legislature may not be evil; but before you made that one-sidedness the ground for a fundamental alteration in the character and the structure of a House of Legislature, you should inquire whether it arises from permanent or from exceptional causes—whether it is a lasting or temporary phenomenon. Now, what is this preponderance of the Tory Party in the House of Lords? Is it a thing which has always existed, or is it due to special causes having arisen in recent days? My Lords, my Parliamentary life extends somewhere back to the year 1853; and if I may limit my considerations to those times, I confess it seems to me that not only is this Tory preponderance not a thing necessarily belonging to this House, not an essential part of it, but that it has been confined to the life of one man, and the latter half of the life of that man. In 1853 a measure was brought forward which deeply affected many persons in this House, and influenced the opinions of a large body—namely, the Succession Duty. Lord Derby, the Leader of the Tory Party, opposed that measure, and was defeated; and the Government of the day—a Liberal Government—were successful. In 1854 there was a reform of the Universities, which included the admission of the Dissenters. It was very much opposed by the Tory Party at that time in the House of Commons and in this House. Lord Derby, who led the attack on that occasion, was utterly defeated; and the Government of the day—a Liberal Government—carried their principal measure. Passing on to the year 1857, I find that Lord Palmerston was in Office, and that a Vote of Censure was brought forward in this House on the conduct of the Chinese War, a similar Vote having been actually passed in the other House by the Tory Party, assisted by some deserters from the other side. The Motion was rejected in this House, rejected by the Liberal Government of the day, rejected against Lord Derby, the then Leader of the Tory Party. In 1864 Lord Palmerston's conduct of the Danish business attracted considerable censure, and there was a very angry controversy. Lord Palmerston was challenged in the other House of Parliament, and only avoided a Vote of Censure by a majority of 18. A Vote of Censure was moved in this House, and again the Liberal Party succeeded in obtaining a majority of the Peers present in this House. and the Tory Party were defeated. Up to that date, then, is it not ridiculous to say that there was such a Tory majority in this House as to expose it to the charge of being a Tory Assembly? The charge utterly falls to the ground. No doubt, when Lord Palmerston passed away and another statesman took the helm, matters changed. When I came to this House in 1868 there was a Tory majority—a very small one, but it grew year by year. It grew in spite of the numbers of Peers poured into the House by Mr. Gladstone—Peers who were almost to a man converted after their appearance here. It grew not by reason of any inherent Toryism in the House, not by reason of any one-sided character in the Assembly—it grew because the peculiar measures which Mr. Gladstone proposed were of a character to produce an entirely different dividing line of Parties. I wish to avoid language of Party controversy, and, therefore, I will not examine into the character of those measures more closely. But they were peculiar in that they drew a new dividing line between Parties, and, unfortunately, your Parties coincided with classes much more closely than had ever been the case before. But it was due to a temporary circumstance, to the influence of a single statesman, to the career and growing predilections of a single man, undoubtedly by his ability and his great mastery over the convictions of his countrymen; but it was due to his action, his policy, and it was conterminous with his career as Prime Minister that this overwhelming majority which the noble Earl makes his chief point of indictment against the House of Lords, entirely as well as originally arose. In passing, I will say a word about the addition of Peers to this House. I must apologize to the noble Earl for having interrupted him, and not with absolute accuracy. I thought there was a considerable majority of Commoners in the Cabinet. There is not a majority of Peers, but to say there is far from a majority is not accurate. The noble Earl dwelt rather strongly upon the addition of Peers to this House. It is a large question of policy into which I am not prepared to enter fully; but he selected instances with considerable judgment and skill, and pointed practically the whole of his censure upon this and the last Tory Government, or, at all events, the greater part of his censure. His crushing instance was the last two years.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: I referred to the last seven years.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: You began with seven, but went on to two. What I want to point out is that the figures are rather interesting. What has been the addition to this House from the Liberal and Tory side during that period, when it is said that the House has become exclusively Tory? Putting aside, as he did, the Irish and Scotch Peers, who stand on a different footing, and treating merely of new Peers, there has been, since the accession of William IV., 129 new Liberal Peers and 65 new Conservative Peers. If during that period there has been a considerable increase in the Tory Party in this House, it has not been due to new creations. The whole of the noble Lord's argument against the authority of the House, in so far as he developed it, depended upon the fact that the House of Commons represented 6,000,000 people, and that we undoubtedly did not represent 6,000,000 people. But would the noble Lord's recommendations alter this state of things? Would he, by reducing the number of the House of Lords, by having the Members elected by one another, by introducing the Privy Council, the Chairmen of the Boards of Guardians and the Chairmen of the County Boards, and the Agents General of the Colonies—would he give any sound democratic basis to this House? Why, we should then be just as much a subject of complaint and of resentment; we should stink just as much in the nostrils of the orthodox Radicals of the day as before we undertook reform. Much the same may be said as to the requirement that this House should produce a majority in harmony with the other House of Parliament when there is a Liberal majority there. My Lords, I ask you to conceive how, even with the materials furnished by the noble Earl, you could possibly construct a House of Lords in which there should be a permanent Radical majority. I do not say that you could not get Radicals enough and in any number among that class of persons who wish to obtain seats in Parliament and whose minds are biassed by that overpowering desire; but in the present state of political opinion with regard to many matters that are subjects of controversy, a House of Lords with a Radical majority would be a very odd Assembly. Among the reasons which the noble Earl gave for reform he spoke of the existence of black sheep among us. I am entirely with the noble Earl upon that point, only I rather demur to its being supposed that the House of Lords is the only Assembly where there are black sheep. If the noble Earl will bring forward a measure which shall rigidly exclude his black sheep from both Houses of Parliament, he will have no warmer supporter than myself. It is a change much to be desired, but very difficult to effect; because the kind of evil charged against certain Members of the House is not always matter that is sworn to and proved in a Court of Justice, but depends upon other circumstances, and unless you have the courage to imitate the old Romans and elect every year two Censors and give them the powers which they did, you would have very considerable difficulty in carrying out a measure of reform which I cannot but repeat is most extremely desirable. Do not let it be imagined that the noble Earl's plan would get rid of the difficulty. He proposes that a certain number of your Lordships should be elected by the other fragment, elected, as I understand him, for life. But what, I ask, is to prevent an elected Peer from becoming a black sheep? You would, as it seems to me, be in exactly the same position under the noble Earl's scheme as you were in before. Then the noble Earl spoke about the subject of Life Peers. I was sorry to hear he was so discouraging. I hold the opinion, which I held 20 years ago and advocated in this House, that a certain number of Life Peers added to the House would increase its efficiency and its weight in the country. I think Life Peerages must be restricted, because there must be a limit to the power of making sudden additions to the House, to avoid a misuse of the Prerogative. If we are to have Life Peers, we may, perhaps, have a certain small number created every year, and that would prevent the sudden exercise of the power of creating them. There are two matters with respect to this question of Life Peers upon which I should like to make one observation. Since we discussed this matter 20 years ago, Life Peers have probably become less acceptable than they formerly were. It is not now, as it was then, so much thought necessary that an hereditary Peer should have a considerable amount of fortune. Formerly the charm of Life Peerages was that one could be given to a man who had not the fortune necessary to take a hereditary Peerage. I am afraid you would find that the people to whom you offered Life Peerages would be indignant and would say they preferred the other alternative. Then we have learned a good deal from experience with respect to appellate jurisdiction. We have had three noble and learned Lords introduced into this House as Life Peers connected with an Office, and the experiment has been exceptionally successful; they have added the greatest strength to the House; they have expressed opinions in debate which have been much valued; and they have exercised an influence altogether out of proportion to their number. That experiment may well encourage us to proceed on the line of creating Life Peerages connected with Offices. I believe there is no sounder mode of doing it. I do not know whether it has struck the noble Earl, but when you are considering the question of adding to this House men who have made their mark in their professions, it occurs to me that the Peers who have been introduced on this account have been much more silent than we could have hoped, and they have not taken the pains to give to the House to the extent that had been anticipated the benefit of their great experience and reputation. In fact, I should particularize more closely, and say that unless a Peer has been in the House of Commons—of course, I am not including the right rev. Bench—or unless he is a member of the Bar, he shrinks from taking part in the debates of the House of Lords. I believe, on the whole, it is the most terrible audience a man can address, and it certainly has the effect of entirely extinguishing those who have not got the *rcbur et æs triplex* which is conferred by the Bar and the House of Commons. So far from adopting an attitude of *non possumus*, I am anxious to see any reasonable measure for the extension of Life Peerages which shall have a good chance of passing through the other House of Parliament. I hold strongly to the position laid down by the late Lord Cairns that we ought not to allow our constitution to be made an annual. If the other House of Parliament is willing to take it up and deal with it, I should be very willing to concur in a measure for the creation of Life Peerages; but I will not do it as long as the state of Business or the disposition of the leading men in the House leaves it doubtful that they will accept the propositions that may be made. The noble Earl has laid before us a shadowy but vast and gigantic scheme. It is very difficult to discuss details of which you know so little. When the noble Earl tells us he is going to put the Privy Council into this House, what is that but taking power for an unlimited creation of Life Peers?

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY was understood to say that he had only spoken of the Privy Council in the abstract.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: What between the noble Earl's Second Chambers in the abstract and those in the concrete, it is very difficult indeed to discuss the propositions he makes. At all events, he proposed that one fragment should elect another fragment; but the noble Earl was struck with the difficulty which must strike all—What is to be done with the Peers who are excluded? Can you impose on them disabilities, and forbid them to be elected to the House of Commons? I do not wish to say anything that may trench on the susceptibilities of any person in this House; but is it not just possible that this House would consist of all those Peers who could not get into the House of Commons? That would be a very humiliating conclusion. I do not wish to discuss in detail at this late hour the noble Earl's proposals—indeed, we have not got them—but I want to impress upon the House, when you are dealing with a subject of this vast importance and great magnitude, you should not throw a shadowy scheme before a Committee and trust to Providence that something may come out of it. Let us have proposals, whatever they are, laid before us in the shape of clauses on this Table, and let each man consider them for himself and state his opinions upon them. I am going to put forward an opinion which I fear may be thought paradoxical, but which I earnestly commend to the consideration of the House. It is not only that the hereditary principle ought not to be extirpated, nor that it ought to be largely diminished, but that no Second Chamber can answer with such a Government as we have got, that no Second Chamber is likely to answer in the long run, so well as a Second Chamber based on the hereditary principle. My reason for that opinion is this—it is because most of those who sit in this Chamber do not themselves select the profession of politics as a thing which they love, but come to it by the operation of external causes, that the result is we have a body that would be defective indeed for a First Chamber, where we require all the eagerness, devotion, and intense application you can get—we have a body that brings to the consideration of political matters a feeling which might be described by enemies as one of languor, but which I would describe as one of good nature and easy-going tolerance, which enables them to accommodate themselves to the difficult part of playing second to the House of Commons. If you could set up another Chamber, with all the titles to power, according to existing ideas, that an electoral foundation could give, and consisting of men who had taken to politics because it was the profession they preferred, and to political subjects because they were those in which they took deepest interest, do you suppose, when you have got together a Chamber so constructed, that they will tolerate the position which this House occupies now with respect to the House of Commons? Will they consent to be excluded from the consideration of all financial measures in respect both of taxation and expenditure? Would they tolerate the House of Commons monopolizing the choice of Ministers of the Crown? Would they not insist on sharing equally all the powers of the House of Commons? They would have the power to do so; and they would exercise that power just as the House of Commons did in its earliest days. They would decline to co-operate with the House of Commons unless what they considered their fair claims to a just share of power were satisfied. You do not have that difficulty now. You have a body of men who have other interests, other thoughts; only a small fraction of us are devoted politicians. We are overruled. I have been constantly overruled by the—what shall I say?—less zealous, less intense feeling of those who constitute the majority of the House; and, although on each individual occasion I might have complained that others had not felt so deeply as myself, looking at it as a whole, as bearing upon the power of this House to perform its duty as a Second Chamber, it seems to me that the temper which the hereditary principle, and that alone, confers on the Second Chamber is the only temper on which a Second Chamber can act so as to allow the Business of the country to go on so long as the power and position of the House of Commons remain what they are now. Depend upon it, if you ever succeed in so altering the character of this House that it consist entirely of determined politicians who always attend all the debates and attach the same weight and importance that are attached to their own opinions by those who sit in the House of Commons, you will have pronounced the doom of our present system of government. The peculiar arrangement under which we live now must give place to the recognition of some other depositary of power. I believe, therefore, my Lords, that you are treading on very dangerous ground, you are touching weapons of a terribly keen edge, when you undertake to reconstruct the ancient Assemblage to which we belong. It may be possible—I do not say how far it is—to add elements to this House that shall strengthen it without producing these evils; but it would be very easy so to alter it that it will no longer be the same House of Lords, so that it may either lose its authority or activity altogether, or that it may take a place in the Constitution which will be fatal to the Constitution as it exists. The task on which we are entering is one of the extremest difficulty; you require to know before you take one step what is the next step you are to be asked to take, and to have placed before you in all details the propositions on which you are asked to pronounce a judgment. If Bills are brought forward by the noble Earl we will give them our most careful consideration. Opposing no *non possumus*, we will gladly consider any proposal for adding to the efficiency and usefulness of the House. But I, for one, cannot favour a proposal which means pledging the House in a vague and shadowy way to a large proposition, and which deals with the reform of one House of Parliament in a manner in which the subject has never been approached before in respect to either of them at any period of our history.

EARL GRANVILLE: My Lords, I desire shortly to explain the vote I propose to give. It has been for a very long time said that Conservatism increases with old age. There are some exceptions to the rule, and the noble Marquess appears to be one of those exceptions, because I remember about four years ago he was the strongest possible Conservative; and some people have recently been heard to doubt whether that Conservatism had not disappeared. His speech to-night, however, will satisfy some of his supporters that he is still a Conservative; but I doubt whether it will please all noble Lords who sit here. I hope that old age has not made me more Conservative; but on the question of the reform of this House I must rejoice that I have seen reason to affirm and extend my adherence to the principles I have always professed. I should like to say a very few words as to that. For a great number of years I have held that as long as the Crown retains the power of the creation of Peers in this House it is desirable that the selections by the Crown should not be confined to Representatives of great landed properties, distinguished Members of the House of Commons, of the Professions, and the Diplomatic Service, but that it should be extended to Representatives of trade, manufactures, industry, and art; that it should be extended to men of intellectual attainments, and also those who have rendered great services in social matters to the State. But I think it would much facilitate that arrangement if Life Peerages could be introduced. For more than 30 years of my life I have advocated this course, and believe that if the House of Lords adopted it when, some years ago, the proposal was made, that, while they would not have avoided all criticism or attack, they would, nevertheless, have taken the sting out of some of the principal attacks which have been made. It is impossible for anyone who has had the honour of a seat in this House for 44 years not to be aware of many faults of procedure and of composition, but I think that some of the complaints which have been made against us were not peculiarly applicable to this House. Take, for instance, the case which the noble Marquess and the noble Earl alluded to, and upon which they appeared to be agreed — that of disreputable Members of this House. I believe there is no Assembly without such Members; even in the House of Commons. I well remember many years ago a Member, who was habitually known to exceed the legitimate limits of conviviality, and when complaint was originally made about it, we were told that it would be set right when it came to the Election, and yet that Gentleman was elected to successive Parliaments. Then, again, on matters of immorality, it was notorious that Mr. Wilkes was a most immoral man, and yet he was elected, and enthusiastically re-elected, for his espousal of the popular cause. But it is, no doubt, desirable that the House should consider some means of dealing with this matter in a self-acting manner. A case had been mentioned where an eccentric Earl had kept the Lord Chancellor two hours from his dinner; but that sort of offence is not confined to your Lordships' House. I remember an instance when a Member of a Committee in the House of Commons had declined to adjourn with the rest of the Committee, and had remained alone with the unfortunate witness and the still more unfortunate shorthand writer until midnight. With regard to the House of Lords, I do not believe in the perfect unpopularity of this Assembly. I think the influence of, and the respect for, this House have been very dangerously shaken, but I do not believe them to be extinct. I have been honoured with requests to address political meetings in various parts of the country, and I have no doubt other noble Lords on both sides have been the same; but whenever we have accepted the invitations we have been most kindly received, and I venture to think that it is not absolutely from our own personal merits that we have been so well received, as many of us undoubtedly are, but it is really because of our connection with this historical Institution which does appeal very much to the imagination of the country. Now, in saying this, and in pointing out what I think to be the character of some of the attacks upon us, I trust nobody will think I am an enemy of all reform of the House of Lords. All these arguments only tend to prove how necessary it is to take in time those measures for retaining whatever popularity we have left. My noble Friend (the Earl of Rosebery), four years ago, made a speech on this subject, and he advisedly abstained from limiting it by any details. On that occasion I thought it necessary to consult the Prime Minister of that day as to the course we should take with regard to it. We agreed that we could not, as a Government, support the Motion for a Committee, asked for entirely on the views which my noble Friend expressed, and I argued on those lines, and stated how important it was for a measure of this character that we should have the assistance of the great Conservative majority, on which entirely depended the success of our measure. I never was more surprised in my life than when I heard the noble Marquess argue just now that it had not been general to have a Conservative majority in this House. From the beginning of Lord Liverpool's Government the majority had been Conservative. The noble Marquess referred to the carrying of a Vote of Censure on Lord Palmerston—

The Marquess of SALISBURY: I said it was carried by a majority of those present.

Earl GRANVILLE: It was carried by proxies at a time when numbers of those who would have voted in person naturally voted by proxies. Why, I thought that the fact of a Conservative majority was one which no one could deny, and I believe that it is on that fact that much of the agitation of which we have heard depends. I believe that if four years ago the noble Marquess had adopted the advice then given, and had agreed to allow a Committee to inquire into this matter, we should not have heard much of the present Motion. My noble Friend on the Cross Benches thinks it a most wonderful change that we should vote now for the Motion of my noble Friend; but whether wonderful or not it is justified by the facts of the case—for example, the great change of circumstances, the great alteration in the feeling of the people on this subject, and the great change in the constitution of the other House. A further reason is that my noble Friend now brought forward a definite proposal, whereas when the Members of the Liberal Government voted against him he did nothing of the kind. The strong desire of the noble Marquess to give full effect to the conviction of this House is also an element in the question. I must say this, though I do not desire to make it a matter of reproach at this time, that if the noble Marquess, in giving effect to the convictions of this House, had been actuated by the same spirit as the Duke of Wellington, Lord Aberdeen, and of Lord Beaconsfield, the feeling in existence to-day would not have been at all commensurate with what it is. The noble Marquess—and I am sorry to think that the speech which he has just delivered will tend very much to confirm the feeling—has done much to shake the position of the House. The manner in which he plants down his foot, in a firm and apparently irrevocable manner—only, however, to take it up again after a Vote of the House of Commons or under pressure from his own followers—the manner in which he has announced that what he would like to see would be an American Senate ——

The Marquess of SALISBURY: No, no.

Earl GRANVILLE: The noble Marquess really forgets what he says. He said he would be glad to see an American Senate established if he thought it were possible; and, of course, it is not possible. I cannot conceive anything that will shake the estimation of this House more than the advice, so often quoted, which he gave at Oxford. And that leads me to say that it was very unhappy, not only in regard to the general question, but also in regard to the chances of any moderate and reasonable reform which your Lordships yourselves might be inclined to make, that the House of Commons and the constituencies should be told that when bad Parliaments send up bad measures he hopes and trusts they will all be rejected by this House. I think those words have contributed more than anything else to the present feeling against the House of Lords.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: What I said was that I hoped the House of Lords would act on its conscientious convictions. I suppose the noble Earl wishes the House of Lords not to act on its conscientious convictions.

EARL GRANVILLE: I do not, of course, object to the House acting on its conscientious convictions; but I suppose the noble Marquess will himself concede that such important matters as Catholic Emancipation, the Corn Laws, and Parliamentary Reforms, were in opposition to the conscientious convictions of the House of Lords. With reference to the details of any reform of this Assembly, they might with advantage be considered by a Committee, and I think it is most unfortunate that the noble Marquess should have answered the appeal of my noble Friend by a distinct *non possumus*.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I said I was willing to consider any proposition, but I wished to have it before me in a definite manner, in black and white.

EARL GRANVILLE: I am bound to say, considering the declaration of Mr. Smith in "another place," on the subject, it is the merest bathos for the noble Marquess to say that he must first have a definite plan before him in order to pick it to pieces whenever it should be presented. I cannot conceive anything more unsatisfactory than that declaration, especially when I consider that there are certain Members of the Government, and notably Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who think it most desirable that some reform should be initiated. I at once admit that if the present Government were to attempt a reasonable reform of the House of Lords it would be in their power to pass such a measure through both Houses, whereas the thing would be utterly impossible for a Liberal Government. Before I sit down I wish to say that I am entirely opposed to the destruction of the hereditary principle. I believe there is a great feeling in the country in favour of the hereditary principle, although some of the abuses connected with it are strongly felt. Take the case of that great man the present Emperor of Germany—a hero not only in the field of battle, but in the more trying circumstances which now surround him. We know the affection which he has excited throughout the whole German nation; but I venture to say that, in addition to his personal qualities, there is also the feeling that he is the son of his father and belongs to a race whom the Germans think have contributed great and lasting benefit to the country. Therefore I for one would be very sorry to see the Government of this country carried on by only one Chamber, and from the Second Chamber the hereditary principle altogether eradicated. In my opinion that would be no advantage. It is because I wish to secure those objects that it seems to me desirable that the reforms should be made in the way suggested by the noble Lord—at all events, by the most Constitutional way—the House of Lords not relegating their power to a Committee, but using some of the most competent Members of your Lordships' Assembly to examine and report, and for you afterwards to consider and reject. While, however, I entirely endorse what my noble Friend said as to the desirability of the Government taking up this great question, the Government having given no indication whatever of undertaking to deal with it, there is only one course left, which is to vote for the Committee which has been moved by my noble Friend.

THE EARL OF MORLEY said, he understood that their Lordships in no way pledged themselves to the particular proposals of the noble Earl in voting for the Motion. His own feeling was that the constitution of the House required change, and that it would be wiser and more politic to anticipate that change than to wait for it. That was the meaning of the vote he intended to give.

On Question, That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Motion?

Their Lordships *divided*:—Contents 50; Not-Contents 97: Majority 47.

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Said Resolution here inserted, and a Question being stated thereupon,

The Marquess of SALISBURY said, I do not think that the Amendment of the noble Earl, though no doubt excellent rhetorically, would form a good precedent, or is quite suited for record on the Journals of the House. It is not precisely in the style used in the Journals, and I will therefore take what seems to me to be the Constitutional course, and move the Previous Question.

Previous Question put, Whether this Question shall be now put?

Resolved in the *negative*.

The Earl of ROSEBERY asked, what happened to the Motion of the noble Lord behind him (Lord Stratheden and Campbell)?

Lord STRATHEDEN and CAMPBELL was understood to withdraw his Amendment.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill for the better administration and endowment of the Universities of Scotland—Was *presented* by The Marquess of Lothian; read 1ª. (No. 47.)

House adjourned at a quarter before Nine o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 19*th March*, 1888.

MINUTES.]—SELECT COMMITTEES—Sunday Closing Acts (Ireland), *nominated*, Navy Estimates, *nominated*.

WAYS AND MEANS—*considered in Committee—Resolutions* [March 16] *reported*.

PUBLIC BILLS—*Resolutions in Committee*—Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland [Salary, &c].

Ordered—First Reading—Glebe Lands* [180]; Consolidated Fund (No. 1)*; Local Government (England and Wales) Electors* [181]; Local Government (England and Wales) [182].

Second Reading—Army (Annual)* [179].

Select Committee—City of London (Fire Inquests), *nominated*.

Committee—Report—Timber Acts (Ireland) Amendment* [157].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

BRIXTON PARK BILL.

INSTRUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE.

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.) said, the Instruction to the Committee upon this Bill he proposed to move was the outcome of a suggestion of the hon. Member for the Wimbledon Division (Mr. Bonsor), and it had been acquiesced in by the noble Marquess the Member for Brixton (The Marquess of Carmarthen). It was thought that the proposals in the Bill were so very extravagant that they ought to undergo careful consideration by the Committee upstairs. Agreeing on that subject, he, with the hon. Member and the noble Marquess he had referred to acquiescing, had put down an Instruction in reference to the Bill's extraordinary proposals as to retaining household property on the site, and the enormous price proposed to be given for the property. He was very glad to have another opportunity of calling the attention of the House to a statement made by the hon. Member who represented the Metropolitan Board of Works in the House (Mr. Tatton Egerton). On the occasion of the second reading that hon. Member said the Board of Works had not given its consent to being made a party to the promotion of the Bill; but he further said the Board had promised to make a contribution of £1,000 an acre towards the purchase without, it would seem, any clear knowledge of what the land was worth. If anything were required to justify the House in agreeing to this Instruction it would be found in the fact of the Metropolitan Board of Works being ignorant of the whole subject, and the further discussion in the Lambeth Vestry last week. Some members of the Lambeth Vestry, wishing to condemn his action in the House, said that the Bill had no clause in it proposing to retain any property on the site. So absolutely ignorant was the Lambeth Vestry, alleged to be a party to the promotion of the Bill, that the members of that Vestry really did not know what the Bill contained or what it proposed to do. These two statements would entirely justify the House in giving this Instruction to the Committee. The Instruction provided that before the purchase of the land could be completed, a vote of the ratepayers of Lambeth should be taken as to their desire with reference to the proposed purchase. He could not imagine anything more reasonable than such a proposal. If the parish were found to be in favour of the purchase under the conditions named, the Instruction would be justified as the means of eliciting this opinion of the inhabitants. If, on the contrary, the ratepayers did not approve of the purchase of the land at this exorbitant price with the conditions attached, then it would be cruel and unjust in the highest degree for the House to permit a transaction to take place in the alleged interest of the ratepayers, though really in direct opposition to their wishes and desires in the matter. Seeing the hon. Member for Wimbledon in his place, and also the noble Marquess the Member for Brixton, he confidently asked both to support this Instruction, drawn up mainly at their suggestion. [Mr. BONSOR dissented]. The hon. Member shook his head; but he would remember that, with his wonderful knowledge of Parliamentary proceedings and great business ability, knowing what was going to take place, he came to his aid and suggested a means of averting the completion of the proposed undertaking. He also was good enough to accompany him (Mr. Broadhurst) to the presence of the austere Chairman of Ways and Means, whom he almost feared to face alone. Both the hon. Members he should hope to find voting with himself if this Motion were resisted. He reiterated what he had said on a former occasion in reference to the Bill. He had a statement in his hand emanating from a committee in the neighbourhood, signed by a gentleman named Daun, of whom he knew nothing, nor was he known in the neighbourhood. In that statement he (Mr. Broadhurst) was made to say a great many things he never uttered. His statement in regard to the locality and distance of the two commons was contradicted. But, by careful examination of the Post Office map in the Library, he found that Clapham Common was less than a mile from the site of the proposed Park. He stated in the previous debate that the distance was 20 minutes' walk, but really it was less than a mile along a straight road. Tooting Common was distant about a mile and 100 yards, and it was no great stress of the walking powers to cover that distance in 20 minutes. As a matter of fact, he walked the distance on Saturday morning in a quarter of an hour, and with no great exertion. As to the price of the land, the gentleman who issued the statement was good enough to say that valuers of high authority had assessed it at the value of £38,000. It was a curious thing that though many documents were circulated in the neighbourhood, and statements made as to the value of the land, the authority upon which such statements were made was never given. The great point he wished the House to notice in the matter was this—that a gentleman named Smallman, a member of the Lambeth Vestry, purchased the land, as he was informed, for about £18,000—somewhere about that sum, but the gentleman in question had made no statement himself on that point—and for a short time this gentleman and his son had both been residing on the property. Both, he understood, were members of the Vestry. Then, in a short time, Mr. Smallman turned round and wished to sell the land to the Vestry at £40,000. Now, if those gentlemen were so anxious for open spaces for the poor of London, one would scarcely have thought they would first purchase a small quantity of land at a moderately fair price, and then a short time afterwards offer it to the Vestry, in the interest of the ratepayers, at £40,000. Whether these statements were true or not no one could say without a thorough investigation into the whole subject; and it was for the purpose of securing this investigation that he moved this Instruction to the Committee. He moved it in the assurance that the House would agree it was a reasonable proposal, which only asked that an inquiry should be made of the ratepayers themselves as to the desirability of making the purchase at their expense.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Brixton Park Bill, That they do provide that the purchase of the Park be not made until the opinion of the ratepayers of Lambeth has been taken on the desirability of such purchase, and that they do take evidence as to the price demanded, the maintenance of houses on any part of the site, and other matters affecting the property as a place of recreation, and do report thereon to the House."—(*Mr. Broadhurst.*)

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin) said, before the House proceeded to discuss this Instruction, he desired to make one or two observations, rather from the point of view of it as a matter of direction to the Committee. This was an unopposed Bill, and as such would come before himself as Chairman of Ways and Means, to whom Unopposed Bills were referred. The Instruction was divided into two parts. The first direction was that the Committee should insert a provision for obtaining the opinion of the ratepayers before the purchase should be completed. If that object were thought desirable there would be no difficulty in inserting such a provision; it would be a simple matter to obey the Instruction of the House in that particular, and to require that the plan of the Vestry should be entertained by the ratepayers at large before it was carried into practical effect. In some analogous Bills, where power to contribute in such a manner was given to Vestries on the North side of London, the Committee on Unopposed Bills did, on their own motion, insert provisions, not indeed requiring that the ratepayers at large should approve, but that the intention should be brought before the ratepayers, by notices affixed to certain public places for a certain length of time, so that the ratepayers might know what was going on, and then taking such action, by making representations or holding meetings, as they might think fit. Whether this safeguarding the interests of the ratepayers were affected by the insertion of a provision requiring notices of this kind to be published, or whether the safeguard were by requiring a vote of the inhabitants to be taken, either way it could easily be met; and the Committee on Unopposed Bills was quite competent to deal with it. But as to the other part of the Instruction, in which the Committee was required to take evidence as to price and the maintenance of houses on the site, that would be imposing on the Committee duties they were scarcely qualified to undertake. No doubt they could take evidence—that was to say, they could receive statements from the promoters of the Bill, and could report to the House what those statements were; but they could not of their own action—without, in fact, converting an Unopposed into an Opposed Bill—verify those statements by cross-examination and hearing other and counter evidence. This was the nature of an investigation by a Select Committee, and if it was intended to verify, modify, or correct the proposal upon evidence, then that should be done by a Committee treating the Bill as opposed, and the persons who opposed the Bill ought to take steps to secure that treatment of the Bill. Therefore, he would suggest to the hon. Member that as the latter part of the Instruction would be putting upon the Committee on Unopposed Bills that which that Committee could not undertake, the hon. Member should leave that part out of his Motion. As to the former part, directing that the Committee should insert a provision that the ratepayers should approve the action of the Vestry before practical effect was given to the proposal, that the Committee could undertake. It rested with the House to determine whether the Vestry should afterwards be checked in its action, or what steps should be taken. On that he had nothing to say; but he would suggest to the hon. Member that he should cut off from his Instruction all the words after the word "purchase."

MR. BROADHURST assented.

Amendment proposed, to leave out all the words after the second word "purchase."

Amendment *agreed to.*

Main Question, as amended, proposed.

MR. BONSOR (Surrey, Wimbledon) said, as the hon. Member had alluded to him personally, he would in a few words explain his position. The hon. Gentleman made an attack on the promoters of the Bill, though he stated he would not divide against the second reading. He (Mr. Bonsor) afterwards saw the hon. Member in his private capacity, and informed him that the Bill was unopposed, and suggested that in justice to the statements of the hon. Gentleman the Bill should be referred to a Committee, where the facts could be threshed out in evidence. After that, being informed that the Bill was opposed, and that two Petitions were lodged against it, he did not see the hon. Gentleman as to the Instruction he proposed to move, and he had not seen the terms of it until he came to the House that day. As to that portion of the Instruction that had been moved, he had nothing to say against it. The ratepayers of Lambeth ought to be consulted, and he believed that the ratepayers would, by a large majority, endorse the action contemplated in the Bill for providing an open space for the poor of that portion of Lambeth. He hoped the Bill would now be allowed to proceed.

MR. FIRTH (Dundee) said, as to the last observations of the hon. Member he had received a communication from leading members of the Vestry, who took an exactly opposite opinion to that of the hon. Member. Where opinion was so divided, it was right that the ratepayers should have the opportunity of making their wishes known. He supposed the Committee would settle the way in which this should be ascertained. He would suggest that it could readily be ascertained by the same method as was pursued in gathering local opinion in reference to the Public Libraries Act. But it was a point, no doubt, the Committee would settle for themselves. The policy of the Vestry to expend this large sum of money could not be shown to have had any sanction from the ratepayers. [*Cries of* "Agreed!"] If the House was agreed there was no reason to argue it further; but he would mention that he had received statements on the same lines as those given by his hon. Friend in front that the purchase was first made by a Vestryman who afterwards proposed to sell to the Vestry. This was a matter that ought to be investigated.

Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to.*

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Brixton Park Bill, That they do provide that the purchase of the Park be not made until the opinion of the ratepayers of Lambeth has been taken on the desirability of such purchase.

QUESTIONS.

PRISONS (IRELAND)—MR. WILFRID BLUNT, MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN.

Sir CHARLES LEWIS (Antrim, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he has read the following extract from the report in *The Daily News* of Monday, the 12th, of a speech of Mr. Wilfrid Blunt:—

> "All he could say at present was, that the action of the Government was such that but for the unwillingness of the prison officials to second it, he did not know that he should have been present this evening. It was to this that Mr. William O'Brien owed his life;"

And, whether the Government is aware of any case of refusal on the part of any of the officials at the prisons where Mr. William O'Brien and Mr. W. Blunt were imprisoned to carry out the prescribed duties, or to any orders as regards the treatment of those gentlemen as prisoners; and, if so, what notice was taken by the Government of such conduct? He begged to say that the Question had been put down incorrectly on the Notice Paper; the most material parts had been left out; and he wished now to supplement it. [Mr. T. M. Healy (Longford, N.): Order, order!]

Mr. SPEAKER informed the hon. Baronet that the portions referred to had been purposely omitted.

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I beg to say that my attention has been called to the statement in question, and with respect to the alleged action of the Government there is not a shadow of foundation for it. The Government interfered neither one way nor the other in the matter. The prison officers are enjoined to treat all prisoners, quite irrespective of their offence or social position, with humanity. The General Prisons Board inform me that there has been no act of refusal on the part of the officials at the prisons where the hon. Member for North-East Cork and Mr. Wilfrid Blunt were confined to carry out their prescribed duties and orders as regards the treatment of those gentlemen.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACT, 1878—APPEAL FROM THE DUNDEE SHERIFF COURT.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If his attention has been called to a case under "The Factory and Workshop Act, 1878," tried before Sheriff Campbell Smith in the Dundee Sheriff Court on the 23rd of December last, in which the complaint, at the instance of the Inspector of Factories, was dismissed; whether Mr. Henderson, the Inspector, stated that he was instructed by the Home Office to appeal from the Sheriff's decision; and, whether any proceedings have been taken in such appeal; and, if not, what steps the Home Office intends to take in the matter?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; I have seen a report of this case. Mr. Henderson did not give notice of appeal, but applied for a case to be stated. The Sheriff's clerk, however, being of opinion that the case would be lost, owing to a technical error in the complaint, the case has not been stated. The occupiers of workshops now cease work at the time required by the Act; so that there has been no opportunity of raising the question again.

SOUTH AFRICA—THE TRANSVAAL REPUBLIC AND ZULULAND—CONFEDERATION.

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether any Treaty of Union or Confederation between the Transvaal (South Africa) Republic and the "New Republic," in Zululand, has been entered into; and, if so, whether Her Majesty's Government have, in virtue of the right reserved to Her Majesty by the London (Transvaal) Convention, approved or disapproved of such Treaty; and, whether the Government are willing to communicate the terms of the Treaty to this House?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): In reply to my hon. Friend, I have to say that a Treaty declaring the South African Republic and the New Republic to be united into one State was concluded at Pretoria on the 14th of September, 1887, and will be found among the Papers presented to Parliament on the 13th instant. This Treaty has not yet been approved by Her Majesty's Government; but it is not anticipated that there will be any obstacle to such approval.

WAR OFFICE (MANUFACTURING DEPARTMENTS) — SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1859.

COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether, in 1860 and 1861, the workmen entered in the Manufacturing Departments after 1859 were held by the War Office Authorities to be not entitled to superannuation under the Act of 1859; and, if so, why the Circulars of 29th August and 17th December, 1861, were sent to Enfield or Woolwich; whether (assuming the Circulars were sent) he can state the respective dates on which they were sent, and whether, and when, any lists of individuals or class of persons were transmitted as required by the first Circular to be done at the earliest opportunity after August, 1861; and, if sent nine years afterwards, what was the reason for the delay at Woolwich and Enfield; whether Item 5 of the Regulations, referred to in the last-named Circular, has ever been acted upon at Enfield or Woolwich Arsenal, so far as requiring artizans and labourers to pass an examination in reading, writing, and arithmetic; and, if not, why not; whether any difference of pay to artizans and labourers has ever been made in the said Manufacturing Departments under Items 1 and 2 of the same Regulations; and, if not, why not; whether he can state the date when particulars of cases for consideration were transmitted, as required by the last paragraph of the second Circular of 17th December, 1861; and, if sent nine years afterwards, what was the reason for the delay at Woolwich and Enfield; whether, after 1859, when the men at Woolwich worked short time—for instance two weeks in three—there was any distinction in so working short time between the men entered before and those entered after 1859; and, whether in any way any difference was made either in duties or pay?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) declined to enter into the argumentative task to which the hon. and gallant Member invited him. He would, however, be glad to give the hon. and gallant Gentleman privately any information he required as to the facts.

CYPRUS (FINANCE, &c.)—THE ANNUAL TRIBUTE.

COLONEL BRIDGEMAN (Bolton) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether the Government propose to take any steps to capitalize the annual tribute paid by Cyprus to Turkey, in order to lighten the heavy burden pressing upon the inhabitants of Cyprus, and to relieve the English taxpayers of the annual Vote for the grant in aid?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.) (who replied) said: The financial condition of Cyprus receives the most careful attention of Her Majesty's Government; but I am not able to say that there is any immediate intention to adopt the plan suggested in my hon. and gallant Friend's Question. I must add, however, that on a balance of accounts no burden is imposed on the British taxpayers in respect to Cyprus.

INDIA—THE NATIVE PRINCES—DEFENCE OF THE FRONTIER.

SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether the Indian Government has decided upon the replies they will give to the Nizam and other great Indian Princes, who have offered to contribute men and money towards the defence of the frontier; and, whether they have adopted a plan which will utilize these liberal offers?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir John Gorst) (Chatham): These matters are still under the consideration of the Government of India, and the Secretary of State is not yet in a position to make any communication to Parliament on the subject.

BANKRUPTCY COURT (IRELAND) — CASE OF THOMAS MORONEY, A PRISONER FOR CONTEMPT.

Sir UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH (Lancashire, Clitheroe) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he has conferred with the Under Secretary on the case of Thomas Moroney, who has been more than 13 months in prison, having been committed in January, 1887, by a Bankruptcy Judge for contempt of Court, and whose wife has meanwhile suffered eviction; and, whether any communication will be made to the Judge, or any other steps taken to promote the prisoner's release?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I beg to state that no conference has taken place with the Under Secretary in regard to the case of Moroney. As already explained, it is not the intention of the Executive to interfere in the case. Moroney was committed, not for simply contempt of Court, but for refusing to be sworn in the Court of Bankruptcy in reference to certain moneys concealed by him. It is open to him at present, and has been all along, to obtain immediate release from prison by submitting himself to be sworn; but, as I have already stated, the Government have no power to interfere in the matter. A communication such as that indicated in the Question would be an unwarrantable interference with the Judge in the discharge of duties imposed upon him by Act of Parliament.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Might I ask the right hon. and gallant Gentleman to state whether if Moroney is to be detained in prison for the rest of his life—until he dies—the Government will allow that to be done?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: The answer to that Question lies very much with Mr. Moroney himself.

SEA AND COAST FISHERIES (IRELAND)—TRAWLING IN LOUGH SWILLY.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the fishermen of the west side of Lough Swilly have made representations to the Government respecting the effects of trawling on their fishing grounds; and, whether any, and what, reply has been given?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, that within the past few days representations had been received from the fishermen of Lough Swilly as to the injury done them by the trawlers. These representations had been forwarded to the proper quarters, and would, no doubt, receive the attention that they deserved.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDUR (IRELAND) ACT—SENTENCE ON MR. SNELLING, AT SIXMILEBRIDGE.

Mr. FIRTH (Dundee) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been drawn to the sentence of six months' imprisonment, with hard labour, passed by Captain Welch and Mr. Cecil Roche at Sixmilebridge on the 13th of March upon a London Home Rule Delegate of the name of Snelling; whether the offence of Snelling was that of inciting people to join the National League; whether he has any objection to lay upon the Table of the House a copy of the notes of Inspector Rainsford, or a transcript of the evidence on which Snelling was convicted; and, whether the Government intend to take any steps with a view to mitigating this sentence?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: In answer to the hon. Gentleman I have to state that an appeal has been lodged in the case by Mr. Snelling; and therefore it would be obviously improper for me to make any statement in reference to the matter at present.

Mr. FIRTH: Would the right hon. and gallant Gentleman state whether this statement of facts in the Question is true? Is the statement as to what was done by that Court true?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I believe it is a fact that Mr. Snelling was sentenced to two terms of imprisonment—one of one month, and the other of six months.

Mr. FIRTH: Was the sentence of six months imposed for inciting people to join the National League?

Colonel KING-HARMAN said, it was impossible to answer the Question fully at present.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—PARCEL POST BASKETS.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the Postmaster General, Where the baskets for the Irish Parcel Post are made; have any lots been got from convict prisons; could it be arranged that articles of this kind should not be imported if they can be made as cheaply in Ireland; and, are they supplied by separate tender to the Irish Postal Department?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): The baskets used in Ireland for the Parcel Post are, as a rule, made in Ireland. The Irish Prisons Board, which has hitherto supplied the great majority of the baskets, tenders such supply to the Irish Postal Department.

Mr. T. M. HEALY asked, if he was correctly informed in surmising that the Government in England had declined to get these baskets from the Prisons Board of England, on the ground that the convict prisons would thereby be unfairly competing with private manufacturers?

Mr. RAIKES said, he was not aware.

Mr. T. M. HEALY asked, would the right hon. Gentleman inquire from the Secretary of State for the Home Department as to the custom, and carry out, and make general in its application, any Rule that would ensure that any article made in prisons should not be unfairly brought into competition with the labour of the industrial classes?

Mr. RAIKES said, he would be glad to consider the matter.

CIVIL SERVANTS—EMPLOYMENT IN OTHER SERVICES.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether Her Majesty's Government have yet made any Rules to restrain or regulate the acceptance of other employments by the Civil Servants of the Crown; in case the question is still left to the Heads of Departments, whether any such Rules have been established for the officers serving under the Treasury; whether he or his Predecessors have sanctioned the holding of the places of Director of a large Steam Navigation Company, and Director of another Estate Company, by Sir Alfred Slade, Receiver General of Inland Revenue; and whether regular fully paid Civil Servants are required to obtain any sanction before accepting such appointments?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): Many years ago the Treasury forbade officers on their own establishment to accept Directorships of Companies requiring attendance during official hours, and they subsequently communicated to other Departments their opinion that the practice of holding such Directorships was prejudicial to the Public Service; but no Rule binding on the Civil Service generally has been laid down. Sir Alfred Slade has not broken any Rule of the Service in accepting a Directorship; because the acceptance of such employment has not been formally forbidden in the Inland Revenue. I am not aware that Civil Servants are enjoined to obtain the sanction of their Chiefs before accepting such employment. My own opinion is that the Treasury Rule is a good one, and might, with advantage, be applied to the Departments under its control; and I will communicate with the First Lord on the subject. Whether further Rules should be laid down, and made binding on the Civil Service generally, is a large question, which I understand was considered very carefully by the Government in 1883, without their being able to arrive at a decision. Speaking for myself, I think we should do well to await the Report of the Royal Commission before taking further action in the matter.

In answer to further Questions,

Mr. GOSCHEN said, that the Inland Revenue Office did not come within the Treasury Establishment; but he submitted that how far such a Directorship would interfere with official duties would depend upon the time which was taken up in the Company's business. He might add, however, that he thought it undesirable that a public servant should become Director of a Company, though each case must come under the Rule of the Civil Service relating to that particular Department. He would inquire whether the Royal Commission considered that this question came within their reference.

Subsequently,

Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY (Lancashire, N., Blackpool) said, that as Chairman of the Royal Commission on the Public Departments, he might inform the House that they considered it within their province to inquire whether any general Regulation should be framed on this question applicable to all branches of the Public Service.

CIVIL SERVANTS—POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS.

Mr. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury a Question of which I have given him private Notice—namely, Whether his attention has been directed to a letter of Sir Thomas Farrer which appeared in the morning papers of Saturday, in which he denies the statement made by the right hon. Gentleman on Thursday last, that while a member of the Civil Service he (Sir Thomas Farrer) "scarcely allowed a month to pass without taking part in political controversies in periodicals;" and whether, upon perusal of that letter, the right hon. Gentleman does not feel that the imputation made upon this distinguished public servant should be withdrawn?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I thought that the language I used with regard to Sir Thomas Farrer would have satisfied him that I had no intention whatever of casting any aspersion on so distinguished a public servant. I spoke on the spur of the moment of the general impression which his literary work had left upon my mind. I should be exceedingly sorry if anything which I said has caused him any pain whatever. It is clear from his account of the transaction, or at all events in his judgment, that he neither wrote frequently nor with a political object; and I am quite satisfied to leave his statement in the possession of the public as an accurate representation of his view.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) said, arising out of the reply given by the right hon. Gentleman, he wished to ask whether, in reply to a Question put by him (Mr. Healy), the right hon. Gentleman stated that although Mr. Brougham Leech had written a pamphlet against Home Rule and antagonistic to the views of the majority of the Irish people, he would not ask him to withdraw that pamphlet, because Sir Thomas Farrer had also written a pamphlet; whether, as it now turned out that Sir Thomas denied he was the author of the pamphlet, he was aware of any other gentleman being allowed to take part in a political controversy except Mr. Brougham Leech?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I think the hon. and learned Gentleman is in error in stating that I took all Sir Thomas Farrer's writings as a reason for not calling upon Mr. Leech to withdraw his pamphlet; but it must be within the knowledge of the hon. and learned Gentleman that there has been a good deal of writing at different times by public servants; and I should be exceeding my authority if I were to request the Irish Government to call upon Mr. Leech to withdraw the pamphlet in question. I am not aware that I have any authority or power to do so.

Mr. T. M. HEALY asked the right hon. Gentleman, Whether there was any other case of a pamphlet being written against the views of the majority of the Irish people, except in the case mentioned above, and in the case of Mr. Holmes, Treasury Remembrancer, who had also written a pamphlet against Home Rule?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: No doubt there are other cases.

INLAND REVENUE—STAMP DUTIES—AMOUNT RECEIVED FOR APPRENTICE FEES.

Mr. BRISTOWE (Lambeth, Norwood) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, What is the annual revenue from the Stamp Duties on the indentures of apprentices; and, whether the Government will take into consideration the propriety of substituting, for the present *ad valorem* duty of about 5*s*. charged on the premiums paid by apprentices, a small stamp applicable to all cases?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): The annual revenue from the Stamp Duties on indentures of apprentices cannot be stated, not being separately recorded. The Board of Inland Revenue do not think that there is any occasion to interfere with the present scale, which they have no reason to believe is regarded as too high.

INDIA—THE IRON FLOATING DOCK AT BOMBAY.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether he can state what progress has been made and what expenditure incurred in the construction of the new dock at Bombay, promised last Session, for Her Majesty's ships of war; also what time will be required to complete the same, and at what estimated cost?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): The proposals of the Government of India are now under the consideration of the Lords of the Admiralty; and until a decision has been come to by them it is impossible to state either the time or money required for the work. No expenditure of any importance has yet been incurred. The Secretary of State is most anxious to see this work carried through, and no time shall be lost on his part.

POOR LAW GUARDIANS (IRELAND)—SURCHARGES ON LOUGHREA GUARDIANS.

MR. HARRIS (Galway, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Is it true that Colonel O'Hara, the Government auditor, has surcharged M. Egan in the sum of £6, J. Lahy in the sum of £4, and L. Egan in the sum of £2, on the ground that, being Poor Law Guardians, these gentlemen had given to tenants, who had been evicted, a weekly allowance of 10*s*. each; and, if so, will the Government state whether, in thus surcharging these Loughrea Guardians, Colonel O'Hara acted on his own judgment as to the amount surcharged, or according to a scale of charges fixed by law; and, would the Government say whether, in making surcharges, public auditors have discretionary power; and, if so, to what extent?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: Messrs. L. Egan and M. Egan were surcharged the sums of £2 and £6 respectively on account of having sanctioned excessive payments to evicted tenants. They had not given an allowance of 10*s*. a week to each of the tenants, but of 20*s*. each weekly. The auditor considered this rate excessive, allowed payments at the rate of 10*s*. a-week each, and disallowed the balance. The surcharge of £4 against Mr. Lahy was due to the fact that he had sanctioned payment to a person who was not "destitute." This person had been already refused relief by the relieving officer and the Guardians; the auditor acted on his own judgment in the matter; a full discretionary power is allowed by statute to auditors of Poor Law Union accounts.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (IRELAND)—CONSTABULARY BARRACKS, BALLINASLOE.

MR. HARRIS (Galway, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Is is true that for nearly 20 years the constabulary barracks, Ballinasloe, was supplied with gas free of charge; and that, when at length the Town Commissioners were forced to demand payment, the Constabulary refused to pay even one year's gas, and in consequence of such refusal had their supply of gas cut off; whether the Government is aware that Colonel O'Hara passed the accounts of the Ballinasloe Town Board without surcharging any of the Commissioners for the price of the gas which they had given free of charge to the constabulary, and that, when the illegality of thus giving gas gratuitously to the constabulary was brought under public notice, Colonel O'Hara stated to the Commissioners of Ballinasloe that he could not pass the item unless it was put down as waste; and that the Commissioners, acting on his suggestion, did put it down as waste, and in that way succeeded in making the taxpayers of Ballinasloe pay for the gas which the constabulary had used in their barracks for a number of years; and, whether the Government will take any action in the matter?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, that the constabulary had been supplied free of charge for about 20 years; and in January last the Town Commissioners inquired of the constabulary whether they were willing to pay for the gas consumed. No period was named. They declined to pay, and, at the same time, informed the Commissioners that they were quite willing to have the supply cut off. The Report of the Local Government Board auditor had not yet reached him. Colonel O'Hara did not surcharge any of the Commissioners.

Mr. HARRIS pointed out that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had not answered his Question as to whether Colonel O'Hara requested the Commissioners to put it down as waste.

Colonel KING-HARMAN said, he was not aware. As he had already said, the Auditor's Report was a voluminous document.

ADMIRALTY (SHIPS)—H.M.S. "HERO."

Mr. LEATHAM BRIGHT (Stoke-upon-Trent) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether his attention had been called to the unsatisfactory working of the engines of the *Hero*; and whether any steps have been taken to again test the workmanship of the engines; whether it is true that during the trial trip on the 15th of September, 1886, the engines had to be deluged with water, for the purpose of minimising the unusual heating of the machinery; and, whether, on the date in question, any of the responsible authorities were on board the ship?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): The attention of the Admiralty was called to certain allegations made as to the unsatisfactory working of the engines of the *Hero*; but these proved, on inquiry, to be erroneous. It is not the case that the machinery had to be deluged with water to reduce the heat of the bearings, and all the responsible authorities were on board. No further trials are contemplated.

ADMIRALTY AND WAR OFFICE (NEW) BUILDINGS.

Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY (Lancashire, N., Blackpool) asked the First Commissioner of Works, Whether any, and what, steps are being taken by the Government for the provision of new Admiralty and War Office buildings?

The FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. Plunket (Dublin University): The Committee of the House of Commons, which sat last Session, having recommended that the requirements of the Admiralty should be met by an extension of the existing Admiralty buildings, plans have been prepared showing how that recommendation can be carried out; and a Vote will be submitted in Committee of Supply, which will afford the House an opportunity of pronouncing upon the scheme. It is not intended to take any Vote for a new War Office in this year's Estimates.

Mr. DILLWYN (Swansea, Town) asked, whether the plans referred to would be laid on the Table?

Mr. PLUNKET: They will be in the Library, I hope, in a few days.

WALES—TITHE AGITATION IN ANGLESEY—DISTRAINTS AT HENEGLWYS.

Mr. J. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he has been in communication with the Chief Constable of Anglesey on the subject of the riots that were reported in the newspapers to have taken place recently on the occasion of the levying of tithe distraints in the parish of Heneglwys; whether Mr. Peterson, the agent of the Clergy Defence Association, on that occasion refused to carry out all the distraints he had in hand, alleging that he was prevented from so doing by the riotous conduct of the people; whether the Chief Constable has reported to him that there was no riot on that occasion, and that there was nothing to prevent Mr. Peterson completing the work he had in hand, and that he had told Mr. Peterson so and urged him to proceed; whether Mr. Peterson declined to do so, and has since demanded the assistance of the military, and whether such demand has been refused by the County Magistrates, acting on the advice of the Chief Constable; and, whether he will cause an inquiry to be made into all the circumstances of the case?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): The answer to the first two paragraphs is in the affirmative. The Chief Constable has reported to me that, in his opinion, the accounts of the rioting were exaggerated, and he saw no reason why the day's work should not be completed, 10 distraints out the 13 having already been made. I am informed by the Chief Constable that no application has been made to the Local Authorities for the assistance of the military. The Police Committee have had the whole matter fully brought to their notice, and I do not think that any further inquiry will be necessary.

LOTTERIES ACT—PRIZE DRAWINGS AT DUNDALK.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to a "Grand Bazaar and Drawing of Prizes" to be held in the Town Hall, Dundalk, on the 15th, 16th, and 17th of May, 1888, "under the patronage of his Grace the Primate and the Priests," in which the first prize, out of some hundreds, is a "Purse containing £100, gift of the late Primate, Most Rev. Dr. McGettigan;" whether his attention has also been called to a similar lottery to be held in the Leinster Hall, Dublin, on the 26th, 27th, and 28th of June, in which the "First Prize is a gold medal, set in diamonds, the gift of His Highness Pope Leo XIII," and the second prize is "An oil painting of Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P., and two vols. of his works, with autograph letter, presented by himself;" whether he is aware that a similar lottery was announced to take place in Dublin on the 14th and 15th of December, 1886, at which, as a premium for selling 40 tickets value £1, special "All Prize" tickets were sent out, and no value for such tickets could be obtained by the vendor; and, if he will take steps to stop such illegal practices henceforth?

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Before this Question is answered, I want to ask you, Mr. Speaker, why it is that, with reference to the Question down today, and that on the two last occasions upon this subject, a different practice obtains? For instance, in this Question there is "an oil painting"——

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! There is no difference in the practice, nor is any distinction made between Questions from one side of the House or the other. The hon. and learned Gentleman is not warranted in stating that.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Then I will put it in this way, Sir. Why is it that Members' names are printed in the Question now before the House; whereas as regards the generality of Questions the Divisions which Members represent are given?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: With regard to the Question on the Paper, as my hon. Friend is aware, several Questions have been put in the House from time to time on the subject of lotteries. The Government would be loth to interfere with any charitable movement; but they would point out the great danger of introducing any element which would tend to create gambling, a result which, no doubt, would be furthest from the intentions of the promoters. My attention has been called to the advertisements in the cases referred to; but I cannot say whether the prizes have been the gifts of the persons named. As regards the case referred to in the third paragraph, I have no official information.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—JUDICIAL RENTS—RETURNS.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What were the numbers of cases of applications for judicial rents entered in but not adjudicated upon by the Land Courts on the 1st of March, 1887, and the 1st of March, 1888, respectively?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The number of applications to fix judicial rents awaiting adjudication in the Land Commission on the 1st of March, 1887, was 10,668. The number on the 1st of March, 1888, was 62,157.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—ARTILLERY VOLUNTEER OFFICERS—UNIFORM.

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether Artillery Volunteer Officers are permitted to wear the same uniform as that worn by officers in the Royal Artillery and Militia Artillery?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The Artillery Volunteers are permitted to wear the same uniform as the Royal and Militia Artillery, except that they wear silver lace, where the others wear gold lace.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—ARTILLERY VOLUNTEERS AT SHOEBURYNESS.

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright) asked the Secretary of State for War, What is the average number for the last two years of Artillery Volunteers who have attended the Volunteer Camps at Shoeburyness and Barry respectively?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The average during the period mentioned was 1,756 at Shoeburyness, and 1,232 at Barry Links.

GIBRALTAR—SMUGGLING INTO SPAIN.

Mr. JACOB BRIGHT (Manchester, S.W.) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, If he will inform the House whether the Government has appointed, or is about to appoint, officers at Gibraltar whose duty it will be to prevent the smuggling of goods into Spain, when the task of protecting the Spanish Revenue from the smuggler belongs to Spain and not to England?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): No such appointments have been proposed; but Her Majesty's Government are considering, as a matter of International comity, and in view of British interests, what further measures it would be proper to take in order to prevent the fortress of Gibraltar from being used as the base of illegitimate importations into Spain.

Mr. JACOB BRIGHT asked whether the interests of the legitimate trader would not be affected by any restrictions imposed?

Baron HENRY DE WORMS: The interests of legitimate traders will not be affected, because the measures are for the purpose of preventing illegitimate trading.

POST OFFICE—CONTRACTS FOR STAMPS AND STAMPED PAPER.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Postmaster General, What contracts for stamps and stamped paper were made with the firm of De la Rue and Co. in the years 1880 and 1881, and for what periods; whether all, or any of such contracts, were made without competition; what part, if any, officials of the Inland Revenue took on behalf of the Post Office as to making such contracts, and in what capacity; and, whether he has reason to believe that any, or all, of such contracts have entailed a large and unnecessary extra expenditure upon the Post Office; and, if so, to what extent?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): In 1840 the duty of making what was then called "franking stamps" and postage envelopes was intrusted to the Commissioners of Stamps and Taxes, the predecessors of the present Board of Inland Revenue. This function now includes the supply of English thin cards, English stout cards, newspaper wrappers, and English envelopes of three sizes—for the manufacture of which articles contracts were, I understand, made in the year 1880 by the Board of Inland Revenue with the firm of De la Rue and Co. I believe that these contracts were made for 10 years from that date. As far as I can ascertain, these contracts were made without any competition. The officials of the Inland Revenue are not responsible to, or controlled by, the Postmaster General in making such contracts; but act, I presume, upon their own discretion. I have no official knowledge which would enable me to give a precise answer to my hon. Friend's last Question; but from inquiries which I have endeavoured to make unofficially I am led to believe that, out of the sum of nearly £100,000, the present annual net charge of De la Rue and Co. for supplying these articles, not much less than half may be estimated as net profit to them, and my hon. Friend will probably exercise his own judgment as to how much of this sum should be described as unnecessary extra expenditure.

INDIA OFFICE—CONTRACTS FOR STAMPS AND STAMPED PAPER.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, What contracts for stamps and stamped paper were made with the firm of De la Rue and Co. in the years 1880 or 1881; when do such contracts expire; whether all, or any of such contracts, were made without competition; what part, if any, officials of the Department of Inland Revenue took in advising the India Office as to making such contracts, and in what capacity; and, whether the India Office has reason to believe that any, or all, of such contracts have entailed a large and unnecessary extra expenditure upon the Indian Exchequer; and, if so, to what extent?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): The contracts of the Secretary of State with Messrs. De la Rue are—(1) a contract for judicial stamped paper made in January, 1881, which expires in September, 1888; and (2) a contract for stamps made in January, 1881, which expires in December, 1890. These contracts were made without competition. No officials of the Inland Revenue at that time advised the Secretary of State for India; but he had before him the contract made by the Inland Revenue for British stamps for the Post Office. These contracts were renewals of previous unexpired contracts, in which higher prices were specified; and it is impossible now to ascertain whether better terms could have been obtained at the time when they were made.

MR. HANBURY gave Notice that on going into Committee of Supply he would call attention to these contracts, and move for correspondence.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked, whether any official connected with the Stamp Department had made a Report as to a probable loss of nearly £500,000 on account of contracts for stamped paper?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.) said, he had no information on the subject.

Mr. Raikes

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)—MARGARINE IN FULHAM WORKHOUSE INFIRMARY.

MR. BOND (Dorset, E.) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether it is a fact that the invalids in the Fulham Workhouse Infirmary are supplied with Dutch margarine in lieu of butter; and, whether margarine is included as an article of food for invalids in the Dietary Table sanctioned by the Local Government Board?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. LONG) (Wilts, Devizes) (who replied) said: The inmates of the Fulham Union Infirmary are at present supplied with butter purchased under contract which is described as "Butter, good, 3rd Cork." The Guardians have resolved, at the expiration of the present contract, to use margarine instead of butter; and have accepted a tender for the supply of "Margarine, Jurgen's best Dutch manufacture," for the coming year. Under the Regulations of the Local Government Board as to the infirmary of the Fulham Union, it is the duty of the Medical Superintendent to prescribe the dietary for the sick inmates, and such dietary does not require the sanction of the Board.

INDIA—THE PORT OF ADEN.

MR. T. SUTHERLAND (Greenock) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, with reference to the Memorial addressed to the Secretary of State for India by the owners of steamships which use the Port of Aden, dated the 16th of April, 1885, advocating the deepening of the Inner Harbour of Aden, and also to the reply of Mr. J. K. Cross, dated the 20th of May, 1885, stating that he had recently requested the Government of India to consider the steps necessary for establishing a Harbour Trust for the Port, on which the commercial community should be suitably represented, and to which should be entrusted the duties of administering the Port funds, and carrying out needful improvements, inasmuch as a Bill was passed by the Bombay Legislative Council in July, 1887, constituting a Port Trust for Aden for the above purposes, If he could state when the Viceroy's assent to the Bill may be expected and the Trust formed, so that the work of deepening the Inner Harbour may be proceeded with?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): A telegram was sent to India on Saturday in reference to the question of the Aden Port Trust Bill; but an answer has not yet been received.

NATIONAL DEBT (CONVERSION) BILL —TRUSTEES.

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he is prepared to state the extended time which will be prescribed within which assent for the exchange of any Consolidated Three per Cent Stock or Reduced Three per Cent Stock may be signified, under the National Debt conversion proposals of the Government, in the case of Trustees, or persons acting in the administration of the Charity to which that Stock belongs where the same stands in the name of the Official Trustees of Charitable Funds?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): It is proposed to extend the time in which Trustees, being within the United Kingdom, may express assent to conversion of Consols or Reduced Threes to the 12th of May, 1888, a longer time being granted if they are out of the Kingdom. The case of persons acting in the administration of Charities is still under consideration.

POST OFFICE—PENSIONS OF LONDON POSTMEN.

MR. SEAGER HUNT (Marylebone, W.) asked the Postmaster General, If he will recommend an increase to the present allowance of 7*d.* per year for each year of service, awarded to postmen in London when they retire on a pension; and, whether, if the pension were raised to 10*d.*, the extra 3*d.* could be paid out of the surplus moneys at present paid into the Exchequer by the Post Office, and arising from lapsed money orders, property lost in undelivered letters, and from the interest on the Guarantee Fund, now paid by each postman on entering the service?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The hon. Member's Question seems to imply that a postman's pension is restricted to 7*d.* a-year for each year of service. Such, however, is not the case. Postmen, like all other Civil servants, are pensioned according to a graduated scale, and this scale is fixed by Act of Parliament. It would be contrary to practice to pay such pensions by charges on particular Funds, and not out of General Revenue.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—DISTURBANCES AT ENNIS.

MR. DEASY (Mayo, W.) (for Mr. Cox) (Clare, E.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether his attention has been called to the report in *The Freeman's Journal* of the 12th instant—namely, that while the processionists who had taken part in the funeral demonstration in honour of the late Stephen Joseph Meany, on Sunday 11th instant, were returning to the railway station at Ennis, two companies of the Leicestershire Regiment under arms, in command of their officer Captain Clinton, and Captain Walsh, Resident Magistrate, marched through the streets in the same direction as the processionists, singing alternately "God save the Queen," and "Rule Britannia," the officers joining in the songs; whether this conduct was in accordance with Military Regulations; and, what notice he proposes to take of the transaction?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The detachment of the Leicestershire Regiment, which had been stationed in the Court-house at Ennis during the funeral, marched when the funeral was over to their barracks at Clare Castle, and as they marched they sang "God save the Queen" and "Rule Britannia." The whole body of troops commonly sing when marching. There are no Regulations against the singing.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): The right hon. Gentleman has not answered the principal part of the Question—whether Captain Walsh, Resident Magistrate, in charge of the peace of the district, was marching at the head of the troops?

MR. E. STANHOPE replied, that he believed Captain Walsh was present, and certainly he expressed no disapproval of what took place.

MR. DILLON: I beg to give Notice that on the Army Estimates I will call attention to this matter, and point out that such proceedings are not calculated to preserve the peace.

DISTRESSED UNIONS (IRELAND) ACT.

MR. FOLEY (Galway, Connemara) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Government will, at an early date, make some provision for relieving the Unions scheduled under the Distressed Unions (Ireland) Act introduced during the last Session?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, the Government did not intend to bring in a measure to deal with the distressed Unions.

CENTRAL AFRICA—ATTACKS BY ARAB SLAVE TRADERS.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the Government has any information that several Englishmen, including Her Majesty's Consul O'Neil, at Mozambique, were recently attacked by Arabs at Zarouga, Lake Nyassa; that, previous to this attack, the Arabs had destroyed 14 Native villages, and massacred the inhabitants; that the Arabs, having as their object the establishing of a slave centre, are increasing in such numbers as to seriously menace the British Missions upon the Lakes Nyassa and Tanganyika; and, if so, what steps Her Majesty's Government intend taking to insure the safety of Her Majesty's subjects in the Lake District; does the Portuguese or any other protectorate extend over all the Lake District; and, if so, is it effective for the protection of the settlers, most of whom are British subjects; and, is it true that Consul Hawes is on his way home?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): In reply to the first article in the Question of my hon. Friend, I have already fully stated the information in our possession in reply to the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) on February 28, and the hon. Baronet the Member for London (Sir Robert Fowler) on March 2. It is not clear how the Europeans became involved in a quarrel between the Arabs and the tribes. It did not originate in slave-raiding, and there was no massacre; and we are not aware that the Arabs are increasing in numbers dangerous to the British Missions. There is no protectorate exercised over the country where these events occurred by Portugal or any other Power. Consul Hawes had proposed to take leave of absence, but has deferred his departure. Since the answers to which I have referred, we have heard that on the 23rd of December the Arabs had been attacked by the Englishmen, who had stormed and burnt their stockaded village. This blow had destroyed the means of mischief and influence of the Arabs, and relieved the Europeans from danger. Owing to the want of supplies, the Europeans had afterwards gone in the steamers at their disposal, some to the Free Church Mission Station at Miviniwanda, and the rest with the Consul to Livingstonia, from which place he wrote on the 11th of January.

ROYAL PARKS AND PLEASURE GARDENS—RICHMOND PARK—THE CLARENCE LANES, ROEHAMPTON.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) asked the First Commissioner of Works, Whether a sum of £2,000 was voted by Parliament in the year 1874 for the purchase of Clarence Lanes, Roehampton, which are the shortest route to Richmond Park from the central and western parts of London; whether this purchase was never completed, owing to the fact that a much larger sum was demanded by the owners of the lands; whether the present owner of the lands has recently offered to transfer them to the Office of Works as a free gift; whether the Office of Works has refused to accept the gift, stating that the Treasury will not permit their Office to incur the expense of keeping the lanes in repair; whether the probable cost of keeping the lanes in repair will be less than £100 per annum; and, whether, with proper management, this sum could be provided out of the sum now allowed for the maintenance of the roads in Richmond Park?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): No Vote has ever been taken in Parliament for the purchase of Clarence Lanes. In 1869 the Treasury authorized negotiations for their purchase at the price of £2,000; but the negotiations came to nothing, as the then proprietor held out for a larger sum. In 1874 the matter again came up; and the Office of Works asked the Treasury whether they were still willing to propose that Parliament should contribute £2,000 towards freeing the roads, as there was a movement among residents in the neighbourhood to raise by subscription the balance of the sum demanded by the proprietor (£2,500), but that suggestion was not adopted. It is true that the present owner of the lands has recently offered to transfer them to the Office of Works as a gift, and that the Office of Works has refused to accept, because the Treasury will not undertake the expenses. The cost of maintaining the roads would not probably exceed £100 a year, but an expenditure of £200 would be required to put them in order; and it certainly would not be possible to save that amount out of the sums allowed for the maintenance of the roads in Richmond Park, especially as this year those sums have been considerably cut down. I may, however, add that, while the Government are not willing to undertake the maintenance of these roads, which lie outside the Park, yet if those roads were otherwise made available to the public the Government would gladly provide a gate-keeper and keep the gate open.

THE SWEATING SYSTEM—REPORT OF MR. BURNETT.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether his attention has been called to the Report of Mr. Burnett, the Labour Correspondent of the Board of Trade, on the sweating system at the East End of London, and also to the evidence as to certain Government contracts with sweaters, given before the Judge Advocate General while inquiring into the supply of defective stores at Woolwich; and, whether the Government intends to adopt in all Departments one of the remedies mentioned in Mr. Burnett's Report—namely,

> "Making it a condition of all Government clothing contracts that they must not be worked out under the sweating or sub-contract system?"

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): The attention of the Government has been given to the Report of Mr. Burnett, and they have agreed to a Committee of the House of Lords, which was nominated on the 9th of March, to inquire into the sweating system. Until that Committee has reported, it would be premature to lay down any general Rules applying to contractors which it might be impossible to enforce; but all the influence of the Government will be exercised in discouragement of the system.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—MR. P. O'BRIEN, M.P.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I wish to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland a Question of which I have given him private Notice. It is this—Whether he is aware that application has been made to the Crown on behalf of the hon. Member for North Monaghan (Mr. P. O'Brien) to have his appeal against a sentence of four months' imprisonment under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, now fixed for the 22nd instant at the Quarter Sessions, postponed for a day or two, in order to enable the Member for the Division to vote on the Arrears Bill of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell), and that the application has been refused, solely on the ground that such postponement would be inconvenient to the counsel for the Crown; whether it is not a fact that the Quarter Sessions commence on the 22nd instant, and, in the ordinary course, are likely to extend over three or four days, and that, therefore, no inconvenience could arise to the Judge or the public if the hearing of the appeal was postponed until Monday next; and, if so, whether he will make arrangements to allow the hon. Member to take part and vote on a Bill of vital consequence to his constituents?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.), in reply, said, the Question of the hon. Member only reached him about half-past 2 o'clock, and he at once sent over to Ireland to inquire into the facts. He was informed that it was true the hon. Member for North Monaghan applied to have the appeal fixed for the 26th instant; but as the Judge had arranged to commence the criminal business on the 27th, and as the hearing of the appeal was certain to occupy more than one day, he could not accede to the application. Such matters as these were rather for the Judge to decide, and considerable inconvenience might arise if they were to arrange cases without reference to the Judge. The question of inconvenience to counsel was quite a minor consideration.

Mr. DILLON said, the right hon. Gentleman had omitted to answer a very important point of the Question, and that was, whether the application was refused, not on account of the inconvenience to the Judge, but on account of inconvenience to the Crown counsel?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, the information he had received was to the opposite effect. He was informed that the reason the application was refused was because the Judge had arranged to commence the criminal business on the 27th; and if the trial of the appeal commenced on the 26th it would break the arrangements of the Judge. That was the only reason. He had given the hon. Gentleman all the information he possessed on the subject.

Mr. DILLON: This is really an important matter, and our information is directly opposite to that of the right hon. Gentleman. ["Oh, oh!"] I think I can claim a little indulgence. I am not going to enter into any argument; but I wish to state we have received a letter in which it is stated that the reason the application was refused was because the Attorney General for Ireland said he would not consent to an adjournment to either Saturday, the 24th, or Monday, the 26th, and there is not a word at all about inconvenience to the Judge. Will the right hon. Gentleman make further inquiries, and see whether arrangements cannot be made for postponing the appeal for a day or two?

[No reply.]

RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC BILL.

Mr. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) asked the President of the Board of Trade, When the Railway and Canal Traffic Bill would be brought on?

The PRESIDENT (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) (Bristol, W.) said, that there was no chance of its being taken before Easter.

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY TO THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND BILL.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) said, it would greatly conduce to the convenience of the House if the First Lord of the Treasury would inform them up to what hour the Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland Bill would be taken?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster), in reply, said, the Government would not take the Bill after 11 o'clock.

RIOTS, &c. (IRELAND)—DRUMLISH, CO. LONGFORD.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he had any information as to the police having fired upon the people at Drumlish, County Longford?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.), in reply, said, he had received a Report stating that on 17 police trying to prevent a public-house being wrecked they were furiously attacked, and they were obliged, in order to save their lives, to fire five rounds of buckshot and one revolver shot. They then succeeded in dispersing the mob. Four persons were said to be injured by the police firing, but not seriously.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—ENNIS POST OFFICE.

Mr. DEASY (Mayo, W.) asked the Postmaster General, If he has received Memorials from the Grand Jury of the County Clare and the inhabitants of the town of Ennis pointing out the want of accommodation in, and the present unsuitableness of, the Ennis Post Office, and praying to have the necessary alterations made in the existing building, or a new one erected on a suitable site; and what action he intends taking in the matter?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University), in reply, said, he had received the Memorial referred to, and the subject was now under inquiry.

MOTIONS.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE. FIRST READING.

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Ritchie) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's):

Sir, in rising to move for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the laws relating to Local Government in England and Wales which stands in my name on the Paper, I fear I shall have to make a rather serious and unusual demand upon the patience and attention of the House. But that patience and attention are never withheld, especially when it is a duty of no ordinary difficulty, such as that which I am about to perform in the House to-night. That it is a duty of unusual difficulty and complexity I am certain all those who at any time have studied the question of Local Government must be fully aware. I feel that, without the aid and sympathy of the House, it would be impossible for me adequately to discharge the duties that rest upon me; but, with the knowledge that I may rely on that aid and sympathy, I shall proceed with the difficult task that lies before me with confidence and hope. The desirability of dealing with the question of Local Government is, happily, acknowledged by both political Parties, and both Parties have, for many years past, been pledged to deal with it. There have been few Governments in recent times which have not had Bills in more or less advanced stages on the subject. We think that the time has fully arrived when this question should come out of the region of promise into the region of performance, and we rely, in our attempt to deal with this question, on the co-operation of all Parties in this House. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), at the commencement of the Session, gave us a welcome assurance on this subject. He promised to give us his cordial assistance; we take note of that promise, and we thank him for it. I hope that he will find that our proposals rest upon such a deep and broad basis as will justify him in giving us that help, support, and assistance without which we feel that the difficulties of our task would be greatly increased. The right hon. Gentleman truly said that there was not any great force of public opinion behind this question to help us to deal with it. I think the words he used were, "the propulsive power is unfortunately weak." It is quite true—and I think all who have studied this question must admit—that there is no great and active force of public opinion behind us on this subject. While I am prepared to acknowledge that that has its disadvantages, I think it is also attended with a certain amount of advantage. When reforms are unduly delayed, and when the country gains an impression that those reforms are not seriously contemplated by either of the Parties in the State, public opinion undoubtedly becomes exacting, excited, and urgent, and I think that the probabilities of dealing with a large question of this kind satisfactorily are greatly impeded in such a state of circumstances as that, and there are great advantages in dealing with this question in a spirit of calmness and consideration which is well-nigh impossible when the state of public opinion becomes excited and urgent to the extent I have described. And why is there no great and pressing demand in the country behind this great measure? I think it is owing greatly to the fact I have already stated—a feeling on the part of the people that both great political Parties in the State are pledged to deal with the question. I think, however, it is also owing very largely to the belief on the part of the public that the duties of the existing County Authorities are well performed, and that there does not exist any amount of dissatisfaction in the public mind with the way they are performed. The government of the counties by Quarter Sessions is, undoubtedly, an anomaly. No one can doubt that; but neither do I think anyone can doubt that, on the whole, it has been not only well performed, and the duties have been well discharged, but unselfishly, wisely, and economically. I should be sorry to think, and the Government also would be sorry to think, that in any reformed scheme of County Government we should not obtain the same assistance and help as we have hitherto been able to obtain from the country gentlemen in the management of county affairs. The duties of the magistrates are, administratively, comparatively limited in character; and I think, if it had not been desirable to enlarge the powers of the County Authorities, there would not probably have been even the limited demand for a change of that authority which at present exists. But I believe that, although there is no great and urgent demand for a change in the character of the Governing Body, there is a real and substantial demand for a system of decentralization by which many of the duties which are now performed by Central Departments, and in some cases by Parliament, might be entrusted to County Authorities, if they were constituted in a manner which should adequately represent the public. I have said that there is a demand for decentralization; and I think it is evident that if we are to have decentralization we cannot have it without reform. It is that which, in my judgment, more than anything else, renders it necessary to reconsider the constitution of our Local Government of the counties. But the question arises at the outset—are we going to confine our proposals with reference to this question simply to the setting up of a new Body on a more popular basis for the management of the affairs of the counties? Are we going to extend our reforming hand to other Bodies administering local affairs within the area of the county? It is quite certain that if we were to set up a Representative Body such as is proposed for county affairs it would be impossible for us to avoid also the consideration of the composition of the Local Bodies throughout the county. It would be impossible for us to shut our eyes to the confusion of areas within the counties, and to the number of different authorities. We purpose, therefore, not only to deal with the powers and composition of the Central Governing Body in the county, but also with the powers and composition of the Local Bodies within the area. I have said that, in my opinion, the desire that further powers than those which are possessed by the County Authorities should be given to a Central Body in the county is much more prevalent in the country generally than the desire for a mere change in the Governing Body; and therefore it may be convenient if I, at the outset, ask the House to consider the question of the powers which we shall propose should be given to the Central County Council when it is established. I may say, broadly, that so far as the judicial work of the county magistrates is concerned we propose to leave that untouched. We propose, however, to transfer to the new Bodies all the existing administrative powers of the Justices in respect of County Rates and financial business, County Buildings, County Bridges, the provision and management of the County Lunatic Asylums, the establishment and maintenance of Reformatory and Industrial Schools, the granting of Licences for Music and Dancing, the granting of Licences for the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors—which I shall deal with separately presently—the division of the county into Polling Districts for Parliamentary Elections, the cost of the Registration of Voters, the executing the Acts relating to Explosives, the execution of the Acts relating to the Contagious Diseases of Animals, the Adulteration of Food and Drugs, Weights and Measures, and various other minor matters with which I will not trouble the House. We also propose to entrust to the County Councils certain duties with reference to Main Roads in the counties. The present arrangements with reference to main roads in the counties are that they are maintained by Highway Boards in highway districts, by parish surveyors in parishes, by Town Councils in boroughs, and by Local Boards and Improvement Commissioners in other urban sanitary districts. Until last year, the county paid out of the county fund one-half of the cost of the maintenance of main roads in the county, and one-quarter was paid out of the Exchequer to the Highway Authorities—that is to say, these authorities received one-half from the County Rate and one-quarter from the Exchequer. One-half of the county contribution was repaid from the Exchequer as a temporary arrangement last year. But we think that the repair of main roads ought to be a county matter rather than a parochial matter. We propose, therefore, that in future the county shall undertake the repair of all main roads in the county, whether in Quarter Sessions, boroughs, or otherwise. With reference to boroughs, we propose that they may, if they think it right, call upon the County Authority to compound with them for the maintenance of their roads within the borough, because it is evident in boroughs, whether Quarter Sessions or others, the Town Council may desire to incur a larger expenditure on their roads than the County Authority may feel justified in incurring. We also give a new power in connection with ordinary highways. In some parts of the county there are highways which, although not main roads, are very much used by the county at large, but which are at present entirely repairable by the Highway Authorities. We propose to give to the County Council the power, if they choose, to contribute towards the maintenance, repair, enlargement, and improvement of any highway in the county which may be largely used, although it be not a main road. As the House is aware, the County Police is at present entirely under the control of Quarter Sessions; and the question arises whether the control of the police should be considered a judicial or an administrative matter. No doubt a great deal can be said for either contention. Unquestionably on the efficiency of the police the security for the preservation of order and the enforcement of the law largely rests. At present the Government contributes one-half of the cost of the police, which may be withheld in the event of the police not obtaining a certificate of efficiency. The Government grant in aid of the police is, under the Bill, no longer to be paid; and, therefore, that safeguard will, to a large extent, cease. It may be contended that, looking to the fact that the police in boroughs are maintained and governed by the Councils of the boroughs, so also ought the police of the county to be maintained, controlled, and administered by the County Councils. But no one can fail to observe that the conditions of town and county are very different. The inhabitants of the borough have been for many years accustomed to municipal government, and they have become educated in the science of government to a degree which it will take the counties some years to attain. The borough is also a much more homogeneous area than the county. It has well-defined limits, and compares very favourably in that respect with the widespread and loosely connected area of a county. We are of opinion, therefore, that the question of the management of the police should be considered as partaking partly of the judicial and partly of the administrative character. We, therefore, propose that the raising and management of the police should be in the hands of a joint committee of the County Council and of Quarter Sessions. We propose that the appointment and control of the Chief Constable should remain as at present, but that otherwise the powers of Quarter Sessions in reference to the management of the County Police should be vested in the joint committee of the County Council and Quarter Sessions. Then we propose to give to County Councils certain powers with reference to the Rivers Pollution Prevention Act of 1876. The House is aware that the power of putting that Act in force is at present in the hands of the Sanitary Authorities throughout the country, and no one could have filled the Office which I have the honour to hold without having had many occasions to observe that complaints are made—oftentimes justifiable—that the Sanitary Authorities are not very prompt in putting into execution the powers of the Rivers Pollution Prevention Act; and I have sometimes observed that the reason of that is most obvious, because in many cases the Sanitary Authorities themselves are the principal offenders. It has often been represented to us that certain alterations in the law are required in reference to the powers under that Act, and that the Act should be extended so as to deal with some pollutions which it is said cannot be dealt with. We do not propose to make any amendment in the law in that respect. Whatever may have to be done in regard to it must be done with great care and caution; but we do propose to give such powers to the County Authorities as, we think, will greatly increase the efficiency of the existing Act. We propose to give power to the County Authority to enforce the provisions of that Act in any part of the county, and that this power shall not be in substitution of the power possessed by Sanitary Authorities, but concurrent with the power of Sanitary Authorities. We propose also to transfer certain powers possessed by Public Departments to the new County Authorities. It now devolves upon the Board of Trade to make all Provisional Orders under the Piers and Harbours Act, the Tramways Act, the Electric Lighting Act, and the Gas and Waterworks Facilities Acts as regards Companies. All the powers of the Board of Trade with respect to the making of Provisional Orders under these several Acts we propose to transfer to the County Councils. As regards the Local Government Board, it is proposed to vest in the County Councils the powers of that Board with regard to the making of Provisional Orders as to schemes of Local Authorities under the Gas and Waterworks Facilities Acts. At present the Local Government Board, in the case of complaint of default on the part of a Sanitary Authority in providing their district with proper sewerage or water supply, or in performing other duties, are empowered to direct inquiries to be made, and, if they are satisfied that the complaint has been established, to issue an Order directing the authority to discharge those duties. If the authority fail to comply with the Order, the Local Government Board are empowered either to enforce the Order by *mandamus*, or themselves to execute the work at the cost of the authority. These powers of the Local Government Board it is proposed should be vested in the County Councils. The powers of the Local Government Board as regards sanctioning market tolls, fixing the scale of charges in respect of water supply, the investment of a Rural Sanitary Authority with the powers of an Urban Sanitary Authority, the settlement of disputes as to boundaries, and other matters under the Public Health Act, the Public Health (Water) Act, the Artizans' Dwellings Acts, the Valuation of Property (Metropolis) Act, the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, and certain other duties are transferred to the County Council. I have stated now the main powers which are proposed to be conferred at present on the County Councils; but we anticipate that at some future time it may be desirable to cast even more extensive powers than these upon them. We believe that we ought not to commit the mistake of doing that at the very outset. It is dangerous, we think, to overload our machine at starting; but we think that we should so construct it as to be capable of having more work put upon it when it becomes accustomed to the work and is running smoothly. We believe that our machine will be so constructed; and although we propose to confer very considerable powers upon the new Body, we look forward to the time when larger powers may be given to it, and we have provided accordingly. As the clause is a very wide one, it may be desirable that I should read it to the House. It says—

> "It shall be lawful for Her Majesty the Queen in Council, if satisfied of such approval as hereinafter mentioned, from time to time by order to transfer to the Council of a county such powers, duties, and liabilities of Her Majesty's Privy Council, a Secretary of State, the Board of Trade, the Local Government Board, or the Education Department, or any other Government Department as are conferred by or in pursuance of any statute and appear to Her Majesty to relate to matters arising within the county and to be of an administrative character; also any such powers, duties, and liabilities arising within the county of any Commissioners of Sewers, Conservators, or other public body, corporate or unincorporate (not being the Corporation of a Municipal Borough or an urban or rural authority), as are conferred by or in pursuance of any statute, and such order shall make such provisions as appear necessary or proper for carrying into effect such transfer, and for that purpose may transfer any power vested in Her Majesty in Council. Provided that before any such order is made the draft thereof, approved by the Secretary of State, Board, or Department concerned, or approved by the Commissioners, Conservators, or body corporate or unincorporate whose powers, duties, and liabilities are affected thereby, shall be laid before each House of Parliament for not less than thirty days on which such House is sitting, and if the House before the expiration of such thirty days presents an Address to Her Majesty against the draft, or any part thereof, no further proceedings shall be taken thereon, without prejudice to the making of any new draft order, but otherwise the draft or such part thereof as is not the subject of any such Address shall be deemed to be approved by Parliament."

The House will thus see that we have provided an easy means by which the powers now proposed to be conferred on the County Authorities may at a future time be largely increased. We also impose on the County Council an important duty in connection with the maintenance of the indoor poor. It has often been urged that the cost of the maintenance of the indoor poor falls unfairly on real property, and also that the area of its incidence ought to be enlarged. It has been sometimes contended, on the other hand, that to enlarge the incidence of the contributions towards the maintenance of the indoor poor might possibly result in centralization and extravagance. I have no doubt that there is a good deal of force in the argument that has been urged from that point of view. I have also no doubt in my own mind that although the system of Unions largely helps poor localities in those Unions, yet it would be very desirable, if it could be done, to spread over a still larger area than the Union a portion of the cost of the maintenance of the indoor poor. We think that it can be done without incurring either of the dangers that I have indicated; and what we propose is to impose on the County Council the duty of contributing 4*d.* per head per day for every indoor pauper in the Unions throughout their county. How the money is to be provided, and whether from personal or from other property, must stand over until we reach the financial part of the question. We also give to the County Authority certain powers with reference to the promotion of emigration. At present, as many hon. Members will know, the Guardians of the Poor have certain powers with reference to emigration, and they may, if they so please, pay the cost of the emigration of poor persons within their jurisdiction. But I feel sure that the House will agree with me that if we could give any reasonable assistance to promote any well-considered scheme of emigration without bringing those who desire to emigrate within the pale of the Poor Law, it would be extremely desirable. We know that many countries abroad regard with little favour the immigration of those who were sent out by means of the poor rate; and in some countries they are not received at all. Well, can nothing be done, by means of this Bill, to assist those who desire to emigrate before they come upon the poor rate? Can anything be done—can a machinery be created by which those who desire to emigrate may be assisted otherwise than by that means? We know that there are many societies existing for the purpose of promoting emigration. There are also associations in the Colonies themselves who would gladly render assistance to any well-considered scheme of emigrating fit persons. But no means exist, so far as I know, at present by which any assistance can be given in this country in this direction without a Vote being proposed by Parliament. We think that certain powers in connection with this matter may very fairly be put upon the county; and we propose to authorize the County Council to make advances to any person or bodies of persons, corporate or unincorporate, for aiding emigration, and to give them power where there is reasonable cause for believing that the amount so advanced will be repaid by the emigrants, with or without "guarantee for repayment" from the Colonial Government, or from any other person or persons. We believe that, if the House so approves, it will be a desirable stimulant to emigration, and greatly relieve much of the distress of which we lately unfortunately have heard so much, and which, I am sure, we all so deeply deplore. I believe that with proper care this may be done without burdening the rates. We also propose to give County Councils powers to make other charges which will entail upon the county other contributions in lieu of certain contributions now made from the Exchequer. But the details in connection with these I shall explain when I come to the financial part of the question. With reference to the finances of the county, I may say that we give to the County Councils borrowing powers, for the purpose of any duty imposed upon them or authorized by the Act; and we also give them powers to borrow money for the purpose of lending to other authorities within their jurisdiction, for it may very well be that the county may be able to raise money at a more favourable rate than could be done by the minor Local Authorities, some of which are very small. We preserve the powers of the Local Government Board with reference to their consent to the exercise of these borrowing powers by the County Council. The Local Government Board will also audit the accounts, and we propose to impose an obligation on the County Authority to make out a budget of their receipts and expenditure at the commencement of their financial year, so that ratepayers in the county may understand the whole scheme of expenditure and income once for all at the beginning of the year. Having explained to the House the powers we propose to confer on the new Body, I now come to consider the question of the constitution of the Body and the area in which it is to be elected. First of all, in reference to the question of area, the House will readily understand that it is one of the most difficult of all the many difficult subjects connected with the reform of Local Government. There are 172 Poor Law Unions and 65 Boroughs and other Urban Sanitary Districts situate in more than one county. No one can doubt that it is extremely desirable, if it be possible, that these areas should be brought within the county and made coterminous with the county. Feeling the desirability of securing this, we asked the House last Session to pass an Act empowering certain Boundary Commissioners to inquire into the subject, with the view of making recommendations which might have the effect of bringing overlapping areas within the boundaries of the counties. I ought not to refer to this matter without saying how greatly we all appreciate the labour the Commissioners have expended in performing an extremely difficult, complicated, and delicate task. But we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that there is nothing which has created more feeling throughout the country than the supposition on the part of the inhabitants of the counties that either their County boundaries or their Union boundaries are to be altered. The feeling which has been created has differed with respect to these two classes of boundaries, and undoubtedly the strongest feeling has been indicated with reference to any alteration in the ancient landmarks of the country. This feeling is not by any means confined to those with whom I am politically associated; but it has been evidenced quite as much, I believe, in the ranks of those who are not connected with the Party on this side, as it has among the Members of the Party sitting on the other side. It is a feeling entirely sentimental; but hon. Gentlemen will understand that a sentimental grievance is by no means the least difficult to overcome. So, with reference to the alteration of the Unions, there has been great feeling evinced on this point, but for different reasons. I am not going now to argue the question whether or not the Unions, as originally fixed, were fixed wisely or judiciously. But, undoubtedly, whether they were wisely or unwisely fixed originally or not, people have become accustomed to the boundaries of Unions as they exist at the present time. There are two great and important questions involved here. There is, first, the financial question; and, secondly, the question of convenience. The financial question is a grave one, for there can be no doubt that if alterations of Unions are to be made, it will often happen that they may have to be made in connection with large alterations in the incidence of taxation. So, also, with reference to the question of convenience, these matters have to be considered not alone in connection with the convenience of the Guardians themselves, but also with the convenience of the poor; and in any suggested alteration of the Unions it is impossible to leave out all consideration of the question of access and the position of the workhouse, which forms so important an element in our Union system. Therefore, whether you regard this question of the alteration of boundaries from a County point of view or from the Union point of view, all must acknowledge that it is attended with difficulties so great, that if we were to make it a necessary condition of our measure that these alterations should be made, our Bill would certainly be gravely imperilled; and undoubtedly, also, it would be impossible to bring the Bill into operation within any reasonable time, because of the difficulties attending the adjustment of these boundaries. We have, therefore, to submit to the House upon this question proposals which, I trust, will be regarded as satisfactory. We do not desire to delay the election and the assembling of the new Councils one day longer than is necessary. We propose, therefore, that, at any rate for the first election to the County Councils, the present area shall be the geographical county as it is at present constituted, but with certain alterations and certain exceptions. There are some municipal boroughs and large and important urban sanitary districts which are in more than one county. I have already given the number of these—65. There is no question of sentiment involved here as to any alteration which may be rendered necessary to bring these boroughs and urban areas into one county; neither is there any question of the alteration of the incidence of charges, because the county rate does not greatly vary, and it will only be on the county rate that any alteration can take place if we enact that these urban districts shall be in one county. The House will readily see that it is impossible to contemplate the giving of any control of any kind within these districts to two different County Councils. We, therefore, propose that all municipal boroughs and urban districts which overlap two counties shall be held to be within the county in which the largest portion of their population is situated; and, with these exceptions, we propose that the first election shall take place within the geographical county. We propose that the county is to be divided out into electoral divisions consisting of sanitary districts, combinations of sanitary districts, and portions of sanitary districts; and we provide that where a Union is in more than one county, the portion within one county shall be either considered a separate sanitary district, or shall be added to an adjoining rural sanitary district in the same county. So far as it is possible to arrange, we propose that the electoral districts shall have about an equal population and return each one member. We propose to impose upon the Local Government Board the duty of fixing the numbers for each county; and it is obvious that this can only be done by a close examination of the circumstances of each county, and that no arrangement in the Bill fixing the numbers for so many thousands of people can possibly be satisfactory, because, if that were done, a large county would in that case have a ridiculously large Council, and a small county hardly any Council at all; and, therefore, it is impossible to fix any general number which will enable divisions to return one member in all counties throughout England and Wales. We propose to impose on the existing County Authority the duty of dividing the county into electoral divisions in districts other than municipal boroughs entitled to one or more representatives. Boroughs will, in that case, fix their own divisions where they have more than one member. May I now, for a moment, recapitulate the mode that will be adopted, as it is desirable that that should be clearly understood? Municipal boroughs and urban districts, when in more than one county, shall be considered to be in the county where the largest portion of their population is situate. Rural sanitary districts in more than one county shall be divided. Electoral divisions will consist of sanitary districts or parts or combinations of sanitary districts. Each division will return one member. The Local Government Board will fix the number for each county, which will vary. They will inform each municipal borough entitled to one or more representatives how many members are apportioned to it, and the Council will define the divisions for elections. They will inform the present County Authority how many members are apportioned to the rural sanitary and local government districts, and Quarter Sessions will divide the areas into single-member divisions. This arrangement of boundaries and electoral divisions may be altered subsequently to the first election. We provide that the Reports of the Boundaries Commission shall be referred to the County Council affected by the Report. They are to make proposals to the Local Government Board for the purpose of adjusting the boundaries of their counties and other areas of local government, with a view of securing that no such area shall be in more than one county. And the Local Government Board, on the report of the county or borough that the alteration of the borough or county is desirable, or that the alteration of the boundaries or numbers of the electoral divisions is desirable, may make an order for such alteration; but this order, if it alters the boundaries of the county or borough, must be confirmed by Parliament. Parliament will thus have an opportunity of fully considering every proposal that will be made by the County Council for the alteration of the boundaries both of boroughs and of counties. Now, Sir, I come to the constitution of the County Council. Several suggestions have been made. One was that the Council should consist of delegates from the Boards of Guardians. I am afraid that we feel bound to put aside at once such a suggestion as that. We feel that no system of delegated elections would by any means prove satisfactory. We believe that it is essential that whoever shall be the representatives of the constituencies on the County Councils should be checked by the healthy test of direct contact with those who elect them. Another suggestion was that the County Council should consist partly of owners and partly of occupiers. Undoubtedly there is a good deal to be said for that suggestion; but I think, from many points of view, it is open to grave objection. I think it might set up, both at the poll and in the County Council, an antagonism between the classes—the owners and the occupiers—which would be most objectionable to have, either at the poll or at the County Council, and those whose interests are really identical might be brought to believe that their interests are antagonistic. In my opinion, such a feeling as that would be directly contrary to any good or sound system of Local Government. Then it has been suggested that the Council should consist partly of elective and partly of non-elective members. We feel as strongly as anyone the great desirability of securing upon the new County Councils the services of those who in the past have so ably and efficiently managed the affairs of the county. But I think, if the House were to accept such a principle as that to which I have alluded, the practical result would be very unsatisfactory. It would not only, in my opinion, diminish the influence of the country gentlemen, but would diminish the influence of the County Councils. It is most important that this matter should be put upon a footing which gives a promise of permanence. Would such a settlement as that secure it? I do not believe it would. It would rather lead, in my opinion, to a further agitation on the subject, and class would be set against class in a manner which all of us would desire in every possible way to avoid. No, Sir; we believe and feel that as there is but one door through which all who desire to take part in the great Council of the Nation that sits within these walls must enter, so there ought also to be but one door through which all who desire to take part in the Councils of the Counties and in the management of local affairs should enter. In our opinion, Sir, no other proposal than this gives a promise of stability and permanence. Will the country gentleman be likely to lose the influence for good which he now exercises under such a settlement as that? On the contrary, I firmly believe that under such a system as that which we propose he will best preserve that great influence which happily he now possesses, and that, instead of being diminished, it will be strengthened and increased. In my opinion, the worst enemies of that influence are those who desire to see the country gentleman occupying a position above and apart from his fellow-citizens in such matters. I speak with some amount of diffidence on such a subject—I cannot pretend for a moment to speak from knowledge—I am content to speak from general experience and from observation. But I know that I speak for others than myself, and that the sentiments which I utter now are sentiments shared by the Colleagues who sit around me, and by a large number of those who have for many years occupied themselves in the business of the counties. I also speak for several Colleagues of my own, more particularly for my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Local Government Board (Mr. Long), who of all others I think is essentially entitled to be considered the type and representative of the best class of country gentlemen, and I know that in saying what I have said on the subject I have only said that in which he absolutely and entirely concurs. We have, therefore, unanimously determined to reject the proposal of a nominated class to sit with an elected class in the County Council. What, then, Sir, is the proposal we have to make? I say, at once, that we propose to extend the Municipal Corporations Act to all counties. That Act, thus extended, as the House will be aware, will give a qualification to all ratepayers throughout the county. Three-fourths of the Council will, as in the boroughs, be elected by the burgesses or electors generally throughout the county, while one-fourth will, as in a municipal borough, be selected by the Council, either from within or without their body. [An hon. MEMBER: Oh!] I do not really understand what the hon. Member means by saying "Oh!" I am stating to the House what is exactly the composition of all of the Municipal Bodies. We make some alteration in the provisions of the Act. We provide that instead of one-third of the County Councillors retiring every year, the Council shall be elected for three years certain. That enables us to have single-member districts, and I think this is desirable from many points of view. We shall have one election every three years, instead of having elections annually, which I think is a desirable alteration. The selected members, as in Town Councils, will retain office for twice the time the elected members do, and will be elected for six years instead of three, one-half of the selected members retiring at the end of three years. I have no doubt that some persons may think our proposals are somewhat too broad. But I ask those who have objections to raise to the proposals we make to say how is it possible for us to propose a more restricted franchise for the administration of local affairs than we have already given for the purpose of Imperial affairs? Now the Councils will thus be composed, as far as the area is concerned, of representatives of the existing geographical counties with the exceptions which I have mentioned, and the electoral divisions will be about equal in population. One member will be returned for each. The franchise will be the municipal franchise, and I believe that a Council so constituted will command the confidence of the people in the county, and will be capable of administering the large and important duties which we shall ask the House to impose upon them. What will be the position of municipal boroughs in regard to this great Council? First of all, we propose that certain of the largest boroughs—Quarter Sessions boroughs and cities—shall be made counties in themselves. Our proposal in the Bill is that these shall be somewhat limited in number. It is obvious that it would be most undesirable to take out of our County Councils the representatives of all the large and prosperous boroughs within their compass. But there are some boroughs so large and so important that they point themselves out for removal, and those that we put in the Bill are as follows:—Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Bristol, Bradford, Nottingham, Hull, and Newcastle. I have no doubt that many attempts will be made by hon. Members who represent boroughs other than those I have named to have their boroughs also included in the Schedule, and I am sure the House will be ready to listen to any representation on that score; but for ourselves we do not at present consider it desirable to extend the list of exempted boroughs beyond those which I have named to the House.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): What about London?

Sir CHARLES LEWIS (Antrim, N.): What about those places that are already counties?

Mr. RITCHIE: I shall devote a separate portion of my remarks to London. The boroughs I have named are all that we propose to place in the Schedule. There are counties of cities and towns with populations as low as 7,000 or 8,000 inhabitants, and it would be quite out of the question for us to deal with them in the same way. There will be certain financial adjustments which will be necessary between these boroughs and counties. Then, what is to be the position of boroughs other than those which have been mentioned in relation to the counties? Well, Sir, the circumstances with reference to the other boroughs are so various and so difficult that the problem seems almost insoluble. We have first of all Quarter Sessions boroughs. There are 100 Quarter Sessions boroughs, the least of which have a population of between 2,000 and 3,000. They have their own Quarter Sessions, their Councils, their own officers, such as Coroners, Inspectors of Weights and Measures, and so on. For these purposes they are exempt from county rates. Then there are the ordinary municipal boroughs, some of which have a population as low as 900. They are rateable to the county rate, and the County Authority has jurisdiction within the borough, except for the police where the borough maintains its own force. How are we to deal with these boroughs in the varying circumstances in connection with their representation on the County Council, and their relations between themselves and the county? Are we to sweep away at once all the special privileges and exemptions of Quarter Sessions boroughs? No doubt, we should have produced a much more logical and complete scheme if we had felt ourselves able to ask the House to adopt any such proposal as that; but I put it to the House whether or not, if we had produced such a sweeping scheme, the Bill would stand much chance of successfully passing through the House? We have been obliged, therefore, to retain, as anyone would be obliged to retain who attempted to deal with this question, many of the existing anomalies. Speaking at present of Quarter Sessions boroughs with a population of over 10,000, we do not propose to interfere with the judicial functions of the magistrates. They will remain, and, with the exception of licensing, we propose that these boroughs shall still continue to retain their existing powers, duties, and exemptions. But for any new purpose, such as the question of licensing and matters of that kind, they being, as they will be, represented on the County Council, they will have to contribute towards any rate necessary for such purpose; but their representatives on the County Council will not be at liberty to vote or act with reference to matters to which they do not contribute. I may say, however, that though we do not call upon the boroughs to come into the county for all purposes, we have a clause in the Bill which will enable these boroughs, if they so choose, to come into the county for any purposes which they now perform, and I think it not unlikely that this power will be availed of, because they will find that the county will be able to perform many duties now performed by the boroughs at a less expense. Then we have the boroughs under 10,000. Of these there are 43. The House is aware that in any new borough which may be created with a population of under 20,000, the House does not authorize it to maintain its own police. Now we do not propose to go quite that length with reference to the small boroughs, but we do propose that in towns under 10,000, whether Quarter Sessions boroughs or ordinary municipal boroughs, their powers of maintaining a separate police force shall cease. We believe that in this way the police will be much more efficiently and economically maintained by the County Council than at present, where sometimes the police force consists of only two or three men. Then, so far as Quarter Sessions boroughs with a population under 10,000 are concerned, of which there are 29, the Bill transfers to the County Councils those administrative powers of the Council of the borough which, in the case of the county, are transferred from the Quarter Sessions of the county to the County Council. I may say the Council will perform in this way certain functions which in boroughs fall on the shoulders of magistrates. They are functions connected with coroners, lunatic asylums, industrial schools, explosives, weights and measures, and minor matters; and although we do not take away from them their separate justices or their power to appoint coroners, we give them power to transfer these duties to the County Council if they so desire it. Our proposal is that all the boroughs other than those to be made counties by themselves shall be represented on the County Council, that existing powers, duties, and exemptions will continue except so far as boroughs under 10,000 are concerned, and that the representatives shall not vote or act except in the case of expenditure to which they contribute. I have said that, in addition to dealing with the reform of local affairs in the counties as a whole, we propose also to ask the House to assent to certain proposals as to the areas within the counties. Our Bill, therefore, divides counties into urban and rural districts. The urban districts will be the existing and the future municipal boroughs and the districts of other Urban Sanitary Authorities. With reference to the boroughs, the Town Council will be the District Council. The other urban sanitary districts have had their Governing Bodies, as the House is aware, elected on the plural vote. It is obviously impossible that we should have a County Council elected upon one franchise and the District Board upon a less restricted franchise. We propose that in future the Councils in the Local Board and Improvement Act districts throughout the country shall be elected upon the same principle as Municipal Boards or for the County Board.

Sir ALGERNON BORTHWICK (Kensington, S.): Will there be a woman's franchise?

Mr. RITCHIE: Yes; certainly. It will be as now in municipal boroughs. With reference to the rural districts, we propose that there shall be a Rural Council elected for the administration of municipal affairs in those portions of the county, elected also in precisely the same way. With reference to the rural sanitary districts, the House will know that they are at present coterminous with Unions, and are arranged with the view to Poor Law administration. They have never been arranged with any view to convenience so far as sanitary administration is concerned. It is not essential for our purposes that Poor Law Unions, as Poor Law Unions, should be brought within the county; but it is essential that the district of a District Council which has to carry out municipal affairs apart from Poor Law duties shall be within the county. We propose, where a county boundary cuts a Union, that the portion on either side of the boundary should either form a separate rural sanitary district or be added to an adjoining one, and we impose as a first duty on the County Council that it shall make the necessary adjustment, so that an election may be held for such Rural District Council. They will also divide the rural districts in the county into wards, and fix the number of Councillors for these Rural District Councils. But we propose to give further powers to the Rural District and County Councils. I have already said that the rural sanitary districts were fixed without any regard to their adaptability for sanitary administration. It may certainly be desirable that the County Council should have power to consider at any time the boundaries of any rural district within their county, and make proposals for rearrangement where they think it necessary. We propose, therefore, that the County Council may submit to the Local Government Board plans for the alteration of county districts other than boroughs, and the Local Government Board must confirm the Order unless there is objection against it, in which case the Board will hold an inquiry, and determine whether the alteration shall take place or not. In the Local Board districts the Councils will have transferred to them all the existing powers of the Local Boards, who will then cease to exist. In rural districts they will have the power of Rural Sanitary Authorities and of Highway Boards, and the Highway Boards will be abolished. Every District Council, whether Urban or Rural, will take over the existing powers under the Acts as to lighting and watching, baths and washhouses, and lodging-houses, &c.; rates will continue to be levied over the particular areas in which these Acts are enforced, and committees will be appointed by the District Council, which may consist partly of members of the District Council and partly of ratepayers, to manage the administration of these Acts. We propose, also, to transfer to the District Council the powers of Justices out of Sessions in the execution of the Petroleum Acts, Dogs Acts, Infant Life Protection Act; also the licensing powers as to slaughter-houses, pedlars, dealers in game, hawkers, pawnbrokers, fairs, and other minor matters. The existing condition of the rates under which agricultural land is exempt from three-fourths of certain rates in urban and rural sanitary districts will be maintained, and the existing incidence of Highway Rates will be maintained. The complete organization of the county will then be—for the judicial work, the magistrates; for administrative work, the County Council; all internal areas to conduct the municipal government of their areas, and all elected upon the same franchise. The Poor Law Guardians will continue, as at present, to exercise their functions with reference to the administration of the Poor Law within the areas which exist at present, so that the Poor Law functions and the municipal functions will be different, as they are different at present in municipal boroughs throughout the country.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): Will the Guardians continue to be elected by the plural vote?

MR. RITCHIE: We propose to make no alteration whatever in regard to the election of Guardians, or to their powers as far as the Poor Law is concerned, or in regard to the areas for which they are elected.

MR. J. E. ELLIS: Will the representatives of municipal boroughs be elected in the same way?

MR. RITCHIE: No. They will be elected in the same way as the representatives throughout the whole area of the county. Well, an hon. Gentleman has asked me what we propose to do with regard to the Metropolis. That is probably a matter which is not only of interest to every hon. Member who represents the Metropolis, but to the whole country. Some think that London might be left alone, and I have been astonished at seeing more than one statement that London was not to be touched in the Bill. How is it possible for us to deal with this question without in some way or other affecting London? I am bound to say that I do not agree with those who think that London should continue to remain in the isolated and peculiar position which it now occupies. But if the Metropolis were to remain as at present, the anomalies of its position would be enormously increased. And why? Because the County Councils of Middlesex, Surrey, and Kent would all have jurisdiction for administrative purposes within the area of the Metropolis. I venture to say that such a state of things would be absolutely intolerable. Certainly, it is not a position which I, as a Metropolitan Member, should contemplate with any degree of satisfaction. Therefore, we think that we must deal with London in rather a large and important manner. I did not approve the Bill brought in by the late Home Secretary (Sir William Harcourt) for the government of London. I was one of those who opposed it. But I never denied for a moment that great alterations ought to be made in the administration of the municipal affairs of the Metropolis. I did not approve of the right hon. Gentleman's scheme, because I thought that, instead of giving more power to govern themselves in the various great communities into which London was separated, it was taking away their powers; instead of affording them larger powers, it was contracting them; and that the area was so large as to render it practically impossible that the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman could be adequately and properly administered. But I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that there does not exist in London, at the present time, any authority which has the weight and power which an authority proposing to speak in the name of so great a centre as London ought to have. A great deal has been said of late about the Metropolitan Board of Works and about its administration. I am not going to refer to any of those statements beyond begging the House to accept my assurance that our proposals with reference to London have nothing whatever to do with any recent acts of administration by the Metropolitan Board of Works. Our proposal which I now make, was contained in the very first draft of our Bill 18 months ago. I am one of those who, without professing to be satisfied with the constitution of the Metropolitan Board of Works or with many of their actions, still think that they have done great and valuable service to the inhabitants of London. We cannot, however, shut our eyes to the fact that, whereas every other borough in the country possesses a body directly representing the ratepayers, no such body exists in London. There is no one elected directly by, or responsible to, the ratepayers. Then what are our proposals? Although they may not go to the extent some hon. Members may desire, I hope they will be satisfactory to the House generally. We propose to take London as defined under the Metropolis Management Act out of the counties of Middlesex, Surrey, and Kent, and we propose to create it a County of London by itself, with a Lord Lieutenant, a Bench of Magistrates, and a County Council of its own. I may say in passing that we propose that the existing magistrates, having qualifications in London, shall be entitled to sit as magistrates for the County of London. We propose that the Council shall be directly elected by the ratepayers, as in all other counties and boroughs; that the franchise shall be the same; and that it shall consist, as in all other cases, of elected and selected members; the elected members sitting for three years, and the selected members for six, one-half of the number retiring every three years. It will take over the licensing powers and all the duties of the Metropolitan Board of Works, which will cease to exist. With reference to the police, most Members of this House will recognize this as being a question altogether separate and distinct, when you come to deal with a great army of police, such as exists in London. The police will not be dealt with in the Bill. As I think was proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), the police will still remain under the control of the Home Office——

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): Our proposal was for a time.

Mr. RITCHIE: For a time?

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: Yes.

Mr. RITCHIE: I do not know what the right hon. Gentleman means by that. Does he mean that the police will be allowed to retain that position only so long as he is out of Office?

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: That was the proposal in our Bill.

Mr. RITCHIE: I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon. I was referring to our proposal. We do not, as I have said, put this forward as a complete settlement of the great problem of London Government. We have our own proposals to make, and I hope we may be able at some future time to make them. They are on the lines, not of creating separate municipalities throughout London, but of amalgamating within certain defined areas in London the existing Vestries and District Boards, and constructing in London District Councils having in the various areas in the county District Councils with large and important administrative functions. But we have felt that the introduction of such a proposal as that into our Bill would have unduly overloaded it, and we did not believe that it would be possible to have settled that entire question during the present Session, in conjunction with other matters of importance with which we shall have to deal in this Bill. Of course, there will be large financial arrangements necessary as between London and the counties, and the adjustment of these we provide for. We provide also that the 4*d.* per head for indoor paupers which will be distributed by the London Council to the various Unions within London shall be not in substitution for, but in addition to, what is already contributed by the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund, and the poor districts will find in that a very large step towards that equalization of the rate for the maintenance of indoor paupers which all who represent the poorer districts of London so ardently desire.

Mr. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge): Are theatres dealt with in the Bill?

Mr. RITCHIE: No; we do not propose to deal with theatres in this Bill.

Mr. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): Will there be any change in the position of the City of London?

Mr. RITCHIE. The position of the City will be the same as that of a Quarter Sessions borough in other counties. It will continue to exercise its present authority, but the administrative duties devolving upon its Aldermen, such as licensing, will be transferred to the County Council of London, and it will be rateable for all purposes for which it is now rateable, and for all the new duties cast upon the shoulders of the Central Council of London. The members representing the City at the Central Council will be directly elective, as will be the members from all other parts of London. There will be no difference between the City and other parts of London as regards the election of representatives to the County Council. I now come to what is rather a thorny question—that of licensing for the sale of intoxicating liquors. Many of our advisers in the Press and elsewhere have given us advice not to attempt to deal with so difficult a question as that of licensing. But we cannot refrain from dealing with it. It is all very well to say—"Why do you not leave it alone?" How are we, when we propose that all the administrative functions of Justices shall be placed in the hands of an elective body, to except the administrative function of licensing? We do not believe that such a position would be tenable, nor do we think it would be desirable to make such an exception. It is desirable that such a question should be dealt with broadly, and in no narrow and contracted manner; we desire to deal with it broadly, and, that being our intention, it was impossible for us to shut out from the duties to be cast upon the new authorities the question of licensing. It is very singular that upon this particular point the hon. Baronet the Member for the Cockermouth Division of Cumberland (Sir Wilfrid Lawson) and those whom he represents and the licensed victualling trade are agreed. It is not often that the lion lies down with the lamb on matters such as that; but there is a great deal of concurrence between the hon. Baronet and the licensed victuallers on this particular point, though they approach it from two different points of view. The hon. Baronet and those whom he represents are content to leave licensing in the hands of the Justices, with one qualification and one restriction—that they shall have no power at all, and that power is to lie in the hands of the people themselves, who shall instruct the Licensing Authority whether or not to grant the licences. I am aware that the hon. Baronet does not hold the opinion of some of his Colleagues—that the ratepayers should have the power of diminishing, extinguishing, but also increasing the number of licences, so that the Licensing Justices should have no power of their own at all, except by instruction of the ratepayers. When the hon. Baronet came to me with a deputation, I was sorry to hear that he held such a strong suspicion with reference to an elective body, and the manner in which they were likely to discharge the functions we proposed to devolve upon them. The hon. Baronet is, no doubt, the Representative of a great body; but I am surprised that the hon. Baronet's confidence in elective bodies does not go so far as to desire that the question of licensing should be entrusted to their hands. But, Sir, we have greater confidence in elective bodies than the hon. Baronet; we believe that there is no reason to doubt that if this function is entrusted to the County Council, along with their other administrative functions, it will be properly exercised. The licensed victuallers, on the other hand, approach the question from another point of view than the hon. Baronet. They do not want it touched. They want things to remain as they are, because they have full confidence in the manner in which the existing authorities exercise their powers—a confidence in which most people in this country entirely share. We desire to deal with this subject in a just, fair, and equitable manner. We do not wish that the question should be relegated to the time of the dim and distant future, and I am satisfied that it is not to the interest of any of those who are concerned in this question that it should continue to be in the unsettled position which it undoubtedly is. We have determined, therefore, to make certain proposals to the House which we believe will be fair and equitable, and it is for the House to say whether they are acceptable to it or not. We shall make a proposal which we hope the House will accept. If the House does not, our duty will, at least, have been fulfilled. The proposal we make is to transfer licensing, with the other administrative functions of Justices, to the new representative body. Some people, I am aware, advocate the establishment of an authority *ad hoc* for the purpose of licensing; we do not agree with that at all. We think that if an authority is elected for all other purposes, that authority ought also to be entrusted with licensing. Then arises the question, shall this duty be thrown upon the shoulders of the Local Authorities or the County Authorities? We do not think it ought to be thrown upon the Local Authorities, which in many cases represent an extremely small area, and we think it is more likely to be wisely and judiciously exercised by a body elected from a larger area than that of many districts with which we have to deal. We propose to give over this duty also to the same body as that to which we have transferred other duties of county government. But it may be asked whether we do not propose some means whereby the locality shall have some voice, at least, in the decision of such an important question as that of licensing. We propose a new means by which local interests will have an opportunity of making themselves known. We propose that the County Councils shall divide their area out into licensing divisions, and that they shall form a licensing committee for each division, to consist of the members elected to the County Council for the division, together with an added proportion of selected members from the Council. In order to secure that the licensing area may be adequately large, we provide that no licensing committee shall have on it less than six elected members. We make this proposal also—that a town with a population of 50,000 shall be a licensing division of itself, and that where there are not six members returned from that town to the County Council, then that the Town Council of the borough shall add from their body the number necessary to make up the number of six members. Now, Sir, what are the powers we propose to confer on the committee? We propose to confer on the licensing committee of the County Council the power to refuse renewal when they wish to reduce the number of licensed houses. We think it an undoubted defect in the existing condition of the law that the Licensing Authority seems to have no power to reduce the number of licences, however much they may consider that the licences are out of proportion to the needs of the population. We propose, also, that they shall have the power of closing public-houses on Sunday, Good Friday, or Christmas Day, and we propose that in cases where complaint is made—complaints which are necessary for the refusal of the renewal of the licences—that that complaint must be heard by the Justices. We think that that is a matter which ought to go before a judicial tribunal. It will go to the Justices to report, and on their reporting that the complaint has been established and that the licence ought not to be renewed, the renewal must be refused. We further propose that an appeal shall lie to the County Council if the licence is refused for any other cause than the Justices' Report. The County Council may, in considering the question of confirming the refusal, take into account any differences of opinion in the committee or in the locality, or any representation by the Local Authority, or the question of any adjoining licensing division being affected by the refusal or the character of the licensed premises, or any special circumstances. Now, Sir, arises one question to which a large amount of interest attaches. If the refusal of the renewal of the licence is confirmed by the County Council for some cause other than the Justices' Report, we propose to enact that compensation must be paid. I know there are some Members in this House, though I hope they are few, who contend that there should be no provision of any kind whatever for compensation in this Bill. They would be prepared to sacrifice the whole of the capital which has been embarked in a legitimate business legitimately sanctioned. We are not prepared for any such step as that. Unless the House assents to compensation being paid in cases where the renewal has been refused under the conditions named, we will not continue to be responsible for any power being given to the County Council to refuse the licence. We are not prepared to confiscate the property of those who, under the sanction of the existing law, have embarked their capital in undertakings of this character. I know that there are some who will contend that as these licences are renewable year by year no compensation is due; but although these licences are technically renewable year by year, it has again and again been held by the Courts of Law that renewals of these licences cannot be refused unless for fault shown. We therefore propose that compensation shall be paid to those whose licences are not renewed, because we think that it would be an act of gross injustice if compensation were not to be paid them. The question then arises, What is to be the measure of compensation? We propose that the question of the measure of compensation shall be referred to an arbitrator, to be chosen by the parties interested, who shall consider what is the difference in the value of the house with the licence and of the house without the licence at the time of the passing of the Bill, and it will be for the several parties who may be interested in the licensed house to divide the compensation between them, and if they cannot agree in such division the matter may be referred to the decision of a County Court Judge. Then, who is to pay the compensation? It has been contended by some that if compensation is to be paid it ought to be paid by the publicans who are left. In my opinion that principle, if well worked, might be made a most effective engine of confiscation. Of course, the number of licensed houses closed in any district might be so great that if the publicans whose licences were renewed were to be called upon to pay the compensation to be paid to those whose licences were refused, the former might be unable to bear the burden thrown upon them, and the trade of the publican might practically end in their disestablishment without any act on the part of the authority. That, I say, would form an effective engine of confiscation. We therefore propose that the charge for the payment of compensation shall be thrown primarily upon the ratepayers of the district in which the licence has been refused, although power is given to the County Councils in special cases to spread the compensation over the whole county, or over a smaller area than the licensing division. But it has been said with some justice—"The licensed victuallers are undoubtedly, by the operation of your rule, in a much more secure and favourable position than they occupy at present." I cannot help feeling that there is some amount of force in that observation. We therefore intend to make a proposal with reference to this point which, I think, will be considered to be a moderate one, and which, I hope, will be acceptable to the House and to the trade affected by it. We say to the trade—"We recognize your claim to compensation, and we give you practically a vested interest by the Bill; and we think that in consideration of our placing you upon so much more secure a footing than you at present occupy, we may fairly ask you to pay something more than you do at present for your licence;" and we, therefore, propose to give power to the County Authority to increase the licence duty of publicans by 20 per cent. The effect of that increased charge will be to raise an additional sum throughout the country for the year of no less than £300,000—that is, if the power to be given by the Bill in this respect is fully exercised by the County Councils throughout England. We think that a proposal of this kind will meet the justice of the case as far as the contribution from the trade itself is concerned, and that it is fair upon the face of it. Having dealt with this matter, the House will be glad to hear that I am now coming to the last subject with which it will be necessary for me to deal, and that relates to the important subject of finance and the question of the relations that we propose shall exist in future between the Imperial and the local taxpayer. There is no doubt that to this branch of the subject, perhaps more than to any other, the minds of many who have long looked forward to the production of a Local Government Bill are directed, and upon it their hopes are mainly concentrated. I trust the proposals we are about to make will show that we fully realize the great importance of the subject, and are prepared to meet what we believe to be the just claims of those who have long urged that the relations between the Imperial and local taxpayer should be so re-arranged as to give substantial relief to those classes of ratepayers upon whom the burden of local taxation, it is asserted, has somewhat more hardly pressed than upon any other class. It has been for many years recognized by Parliament that the claims of the local ratepayers to assistance from the Imperial Exchequer and from other sources than rateable property are substantial and just. Those claims have been hitherto met by what are called grants in aid. I know that to this form of relief many objections have been urged. I confess, for my part, I have not been able fully to agree in the objections which have been raised against this form of relief. I believe, on the whole, these grants have been the means of greater efficiency in the discharge of the duties devolving on Local Authorities, which has resulted in great public benefit. But I am prepared to admit that this form of subvention is undoubtedly open to some of the objections which have been taken to it; and one objection which I have always felt strongly has been that this form of relief mixes up Imperial and local finance in a manner most inconvenient and confusing, whereas, from every point of view, it is extremely desirable that the two questions should be kept entirely distinct and separate. The House will, therefore, be prepared to hear that the great bulk of the grants in aid will, under our proposals, entirely disappear. We propose that in the financial year 1889-90 the following grants in aid shall disappear from the Estimates:—Disturnpiked and main roads (England and Wales), teachers in Poor Law schools, Poor Law Medical Officers, Medical Officers of Health, and Inspectors of Nuisances, Registrars of Births and Deaths, Pauper Lunatics (England and Wales), cost of Criminal Prosecutions, subventions in aid of the Police (Counties, Boroughs, and Metropolis), grants to poor School Boards, and awards to Public Vaccinators, which make an aggregate sum of about £2,600,000 in round numbers. It is now necessary for me to state to the House how we propose to fill the void in the local purse which will be created by the disappearance of these grants in aid. But something more even than this is expected from us, and to enable me to fulfil this expectation I have had to appeal to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, I am bound to say, has met me in a large and generous spirit. By his aid I am able to present to the House and to the country what I am sure they will consider a large and liberal measure of relief to local burdens. As I have already said, the amount of the grants in aid which will disappear is £2,600,000, and the amount of revenue which we propose to find in substitution for that sum, if our Bill passes, is £5,600,000, being an increase of £3,000,000. This sum does not include the £300,000 arising from, the 20 per cent additional publicans' licence duty, with regard to which we give powers to the Local Authorities, in the event of our proposals being accepted. Then comes the question, How is this revenue to be raised? We propose that the licences for the sale of intoxicating liquors for consumption on the premises, and grocers' licences for the sale by retail of spirits, beer, and wine, and licences to deal in game, shall be collected by the Local Authorities, and form part of the revenues of County Authorities; these amount to £1,378,143. We propose also to hand over to the Local Authorities the produce of the following licences:—

	£
Beer dealers	29,755
Spirit dealers	103,060
Sweet dealers	315
Wine dealers	43,002
Refreshment house keepers,	6,759
Tobacco dealers	63,541
Carriages	492,779
Armorial bearings	69,184
Male servants	123,500
Dogs	317,241
Game (licences to kill) ..	139,628
Guns	68,448
Appraisers, Auctioneers, and House agents ..	65,655
Pawnbrokers	28,905
Plate dealers	39,958
Total	£1,591,730

These, it is evident, will be much better and more economically collected by the Inland Revenue than by the County Authorities; but the revenue will, of course, be derived by every County Council from the licences taken out within the area of their county. I have stated that the licences for the sale of intoxicating liquors, which will be transferred, will amount to £1,378,143, and the sum to be derived from other licences will be £1,591,730, roughly amounting together to £3,000,000. In addition to the existing licence duties, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will propose in his Budget to raise other revenue from other licence duties which he will name, amounting to £826,000. In addition to these licence duties, my right hon. Friend proposes to give us a substantial contribution from personalty amounting to about £1,800,000. It is obvious that it would be highly improper for me to forestall the statement to be made by my right hon. Friend by telling the House either the names of the new licences to be created, or the source from which he proposes to derive the contribution from personal property; but it was impossible for me to deal with the question of the re-arrangement of finances without informing the House substantially of the amounts to be given by my right hon. Friend. It will thus be seen that those licences and the contributions from personalty amount, in all, to £5,600,000, in lieu of £2,600,000 at present obtained. I have already explained to the House that, so far as licences are concerned, every county, including the Metropolis and the large towns I have named which will be made counties, will receive all the licence duties collected within its area; and I think we may fairly hope that when the county itself is so greatly interested, as it will be, in the collection of this revenue, a greater vigilance on the part of the County Authority will, to some extent, increase the amount to be derived to a still larger sum. The question then arises—"How is the contribution from personal property to be distributed?" It would be unfair, I think, that the contribution in every county should go to that particular county. In fact, it would be impossible so to allocate it. On what principle, therefore, is this £1,800,000 to be distributed among the counties? We have considered three principles on which it might be done—either in proportion to population, to rateable value, or to the amount of indoor pauperism. In our opinion, neither population nor rateable value is a sufficient test as to the need of the localities. We therefore decide on the last—indoor pauperism—as being the best indication we can find that the amount of relief which we propose to give will go where relief is most urgently required. The contribution we propose, therefore, will be distributed to the counties according to the proportion the indoor pauperism of each county bears to the total indoor pauperism of the country. I need hardly say that there is no class in the community which will benefit so greatly by this distribution as that class which I always think is most entitled to our pity and sympathy—the smaller class of ratepayers both in counties and boroughs; and although this provision will give a large measure of relief to the poorer districts in the counties, it will also give a large measure of relief to the poorer districts in our boroughs, and to no part of the country more than to the poorer districts of the Metropolis. When it is, therefore, said that this question of the redistribution of taxation is one which affects the county ratepayer, and in which the borough ratepayer has little or no interest, I say a greater mistake was never committed than to make such an assertion as that. I maintain that, great as will be the boon to the county ratepayer, the boon will not be less great to those with whom I have fully as much sympathy—the poorer ratepayers of our large towns, many of whom are struggling from day to day against heavy rates, and, I am glad to say successfully, to maintain themselves above the level of pauperism to which the heavy rates tend to draw them. But we entail a duty on the County Authorities of paying over a certain portion of this amount to certain local areas within their counties. The House well knows that many contributions from the Exchequer which we propose to discontinue are payable to Local Authorities, and it might be that there would be an extremely unfair incidence of relief if we did not provide some means by which grants of a similar character should be made by the County Council to the local areas within their jurisdiction. The receipts by the County Authority will be subject to payments for the following purposes, on the same bases of contribution as now adopted in connection with the Parliamentary grants—namely, Teachers in Poor Law schools, £37,318; Poor Law Medical Officers, £147,661; Medical Officers of Health and Inspectors of Nuisances, £71,939; Registrars of Births and Deaths, £9,534; Pauper Lunatics, £479,815; Criminal Prosecutions, £162,011; Police, £1,411,833; Grants to poor School Boards, £6,200; Awards to Public Vaccinators, £19,000; total, £2,345,311. Subject to these payments, the revenue will be applicable to defraying the cost of maintenance of disturnpiked and main roads — which is now estimated at about £1,040,000 — and the cost of indoor poor, at the rate of 4*d.* per head per day, estimated at about £1,200,000 —and any other charges borne by the whole county. The residue will be divided between the Quarter Sessions boroughs not contributing to special county purposes and the remainder of the county, in proportion to their rateable value. But it will be said—"The Bill cannot come into operation until the financial year 1889-90. Is there no financial relief to be given until then?" It is obvious that we could not bring the full scheme into operation, because the authorities we propose to set up will not have come into office until March, 1889. What, then, is the financial relief we propose this year, and to whom do we propose to give it? We propose, in addition to the grants in aid, which are in the Estimates, and which will continue to be paid during the approaching financial year, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer shall pay over to the local contribution account a sum of about £1,150,000 direct contribution from personal property, and an amount which I have named of about £826,000, the estimated yield for the year of the new Licence Duties to which I have already referred, making together an amount close upon £2,000,000 for the next financial year. Out of this sum we propose to distribute direct to Boards of Guardians throughout the country 4*d.* per head per day for indoor pauperism. This will absorb about £1,200,000. Out of the balance of £776,000 we propose to pay over, as was done last year, to Highway Authorities throughout the country, a fourth of the cost of repair of main roads, and to the County Authorities a similar amount, making together a sum of about £520,000 for the same purpose. There remains a balance of about £256,000. The House will remember, in reference to the extra grant of £250,000 made last year for main roads, that great complaint came from the Quarter Sessions boroughs and other areas which received but a small share of the contribution because they had little main road expenditure. In reference to this grievance, which we think a real one, we propose to apportion the balance of £256,000 on the basis of rateable value to London and the Quarter Sessions boroughs. Of course, this principle of apportionment, as the House will understand, is only applicable to the year which is approaching. After the County Authority and the whole machinery is set up, the Licence Duties collected in the area and the amount distributed will be the revenue to be derived by the County Authorities. The House will also understand, as it is necessary it should, that the contribution of £520,000 for main roads this year is not in addition to, but in substitution of, the sum provided for in the Estimates, which will be returned into the Exchequer. In the event of the Bill passing, therefore, the additional sums available for the relief of local taxation will be, in the year 1888-9, about £1,700,000, and in the year 1889-90 this amount will be increased to about £3,000,000. The House will have observed that there are two Bills on the Paper. One is for the registration of voters, and we hope the House will give great expedition to the passing of that Bill; because, if the other Bill which is on the Paper is to come speedily into operation, it is essential we should proceed with the registration, which, as hon. Gentlemen know, cannot be effected unless the Bill passes in the middle of May or June. Then with reference to the date at which we propose that our main Bill shall come into operation. We propose that the elections for the County Council shall be held in January next, although we do not propose that the new authority shall take over the functions of the Governing Body until the 25th of March. The District Councils cannot be elected for some time after, because, as the House is aware, we impose certain preliminary duties on the new County Council, and until they are performed the elections for the rural District Councils could not take place. We therefore propose that, as far as they are concerned, the elections shall take place in the November following; but that afterwards all the elections, both for the County Council and for the municipal boroughs, rural districts, and urban districts shall be held at the same time in November. The House, I am sure, will be glad to know that I have come to the conclusion of my remarks, and it is my duty to thank the House most cordially for the kind, attentive, and considerate hearing which they have been kind enough to afford me. I have stated to the House what our proposals are. They are, as I think the House will acknowledge, large and comprehensive. The subjects dealt with are numerous and important; but, numerous as they are, there are others with which some will have expected that we should deal, and I say at once there are others which we ourselves should have been glad to deal with if we had felt able to do so in the present Bill. We would gladly have included in our Bill the remainder of our scheme for London Government; we should have been glad to have proposed a reconstruction of parochial organization, a reform in the system of valuation so as to make it more simple and more uniform, a scheme for the consolidation of rates, and many other matters. If we have not dealt with these questions in the Bill, it is not because we do not fully recognize their importance, but because we feel the absolute necessity of keeping our Bill within reasonable and practical limits, and of not unduly over-weighting an already heavy and difficult measure. Some of these subjects we shall be prepared to deal with ourselves on another occasion; but, having set up a great and powerful organization in every one of our counties, we believe we shall have constituted an authority which may be fairly called upon to deal with others of them in a spirit in which they ought to be dealt with. Our chief aim and object has been to extend to the country at large those municipal privileges which have been so long accorded to boroughs, and which, on the whole, have been wisely used and judiciously exercised. No one can say we have approached this subject in a narrow or niggardly spirit; no one can say we have approached it in a spirit of distrust of the people. We have approached it in no spirit of distrust, but in a spirit of confidence in the sense and judgment of the people. We have been actuated by an earnest desire to settle the question on a broad and permanent basis, and we are satisfied that no narrower basis than that we have proposed gives promise of permanence and stability. We believe that by our Bill a spirit of active municipal life will be infused into our rural population, with results salutary and beneficial both to themselves and the country at large; and we claim—and with confidence after the declaration of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. W. E. Gladstone)—the assistance of both Parties in the House and the country in bringing about so desirable a consummation. We rely with confidence on the help of the House to pass this great measure of reform which we now submit to the judgment of the House and the country.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the laws relating to Local Government in England and Wales; and for other purposes connected therewith."—(*Mr. Ritchie.*)

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.) asked whether the financial proposal with regard to the Local Authorities which were intended to come into operation next year would apply to Scotland.

MR. RITCHIE: Financial proposals with reference to Scotland will be made by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but it is obvious that they will be in a different form, looking at the fact that no Bill for Scotland can be passed this year.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) said, he rose mainly to put a question to the right hon. Gentleman. But as the first Metropolitan Member who had risen, he might perhaps be permitted to say that although the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman would, so far as London was concerned, come upon the citizens with some surprise, he believed his proposals, so far as they went, would not be unsatisfactory. The proposal to establish a directly elected body for London proceeded undoubtedly on the right line, and his only regret was that the right hon. Gentleman had not had the courage to deal with the Corporation of the City of London. He, for one, should not regret the decease of the Metropolitan Board of Works; but there was another body which he ventured to think even more than that had forfeited the confidence of the ratepayers of London. He referred to the Metropolitan Asylums Board, and he very much regretted that, as he understood, that Board would continue to exist as heretofore. The question which he desired to put to the right hon. Gentleman related to the poor rates. He was—as hon. Gentlemen would be aware—in favour of equalizing the rate for the whole of London. As he understood, each Union would be entitled to receive from the funds at the disposal of the County Council 4*d.* per day in respect of each indoor pauper, and they were to have a County Council for London, which would pay 4*d.* a-day for each indoor pauper under the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman. But he pointed out that already each Union received 5*d.* a-day out of the Metroplitan Poor Fund. That being so, each London Union would be entitled to receive 9*d.* a day in respect of the maintenance of each indoor pauper, and he thought there were grave objections to such an arrangement. In the first place, it was inadequate, because it made no provision for the cost which was incurred for buildings, which was one of the largest burdens on the poor districts of London; and, in the second place, it was improvident, because he believed there was not one Metropolitan Union which spent so much as 9*d.* a-day on the maintenance of its paupers. So that it would result that the Guardians would actually make a profit out of their indoor pauperism. The natural effect would be that they would drive the paupers into the Union to a greater extent even than at present. He felt that, whatever might be said against the danger of outdoor administration, the cost of maintenance ought to be determined on its own merits; whereas now they were still further extending the principle of the Metropolitan Poor Fund, which to some extent induced the Guardians to drive persons asking for relief into the poorhouse. That system which had been mischievous they were now proposing to extend, and he therefore asked the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to this aspect of the question.

Mr. FIRTH (Dundee) said, he understood that the London Police Force was to remain as it was now. The area at the present time extended 15 miles from Charing Cross, into many districts which were parts of other counties than that which was to be the London Council area. Was the present system to remain, or was the London Police to be consolidated? He also asked whether the only functions of the new Council for London were to be those of the Metropolitan Board?

Sir ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, there were a number of boroughs which were to be treated as counties in themselves.

Mr. RITCHIE: No, Sir.

Sir ALBERT ROLLIT said, the object of his question was to know whether these boroughs would continue to be governed by the Municipal Corporations Act of 1872, or under the new Act?

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.) asked what was to be the equivalent for Ireland in the large contributions proposed to be made to the Unions for paupers? Ireland had little or no share in the money which was given in England in aid of the maintenance of highways, and now they were going to give 4*d.* a-head for all indoor paupers in England. He thought the time had arrived for bringing in a Bill to make the same provision for the poor in Ireland.

Mr. RITCHIE: With reference to the last question, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will, of course, make a statement with reference to Scotland and Ireland when he comes to deal with finance. I have no doubt the hon. and gallant Gentleman (Colonel Nolan) will find that my right hon. Friend will deal with these countries in a strictly impartial manner. With regard to London paupers, the hon. Gentleman the Member for South-West Bethnal Green (Mr. Pickersgill) spoke as if London would obtain an amount far in excess of the cost of the indoor paupers to the ratepayers. Nothing is more fallacious. The cost of the maintenance of the indoor poor is far beyond 9d. per head. The House will understand that the cost of housing the indoor poor in London is enormously greater than the cost of housing indoor poor in the country. I hope that the hon. Member will see the enormous gain which our proposal will bring to a poor district such as he represents, and that he will not be found a dissenting Member in this matter. As to the police, one-half of the cost of their maintenance in the boroughs will be paid from the county and the borough fund, and one-half of the maintenance of the police in the counties will be paid for from the county fund. With reference to the question of the assessment of personal property, I must refer my hon. Friend to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who will deal with it when he introduces his Budget. We do not, as I have stated, propose to touch the question of valuation now, but we hope, on a future day, to deal with it in a separate Bill. So that all questions of appeals with reference to valuation will remain as at present. We do not propose to make any alteration in the police districts, and the contribution now paid from the Exchequer towards the Metropolitan Police will be paid by the London Council so far as the area of the Board of Works is concerned, and by the County Council so far as their area is concerned. Then I am asked a question as to who will settle the number of members for London. I will undertake to lay upon the Table of the House, before the Bill goes through Committee, a Paper dealing with the members for London as well as for the counties, including London. Where the Government hand over the power of Central Departments to confirm acts done by District Councils, so far as confirmation is required in respect of proposals of Town Councils, they will still have to be confirmed by the Central Councils, because they could not be fairly asked to confirm their own orders.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): The only question I propose to say a word or two upon is that relating to Scotland and Ireland. It is obvious to everyone that the right hon. Gentleman had sufficient reason in excluding altogether from his statement even the mention of Scotland and Ireland, and no doubt that reason was to be found in the fact that the concern of Scotland and Ireland in the present statement is a financial concern, and the Government have made an arrangement —which, I think, is altogether a wise and proper one—to follow up the statement of the right hon. Gentleman of today at the earliest possible opportunity with the Financial Statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) on the finances of the year. That matter, therefore, I think, has been disposed of for the present in a manner that is satisfactory with reference to the statement before us. Now, I do not think that, considering the vastness and complexity of the subject, I should have said a single word but for two reasons. One of those reasons is the pointed reference which the right hon. Gentleman made to me in his statement, and the other is that I felt a desire to do justice as far as I could to the strictly personal part of the operation which the right hon. Gentleman has had to perform this evening. Undoubtedly that was a most difficult operation; and I think every feeling of the House must be that he has discharged that very arduous duty in a manner which does him high honour. That portion of the subject I can refer to with unmixed pleasure and satisfaction. The right hon. Gentleman referred to some general words of mine to the effect that the Government, I thought, would find on this side of the House no disposition to treat their proposals in relation to Local Government in any other than a broad and candid spirit. Well, I do not think that the time is come for me to go beyond those general words. The plans of the Government are a great deal too large to admit of our pronouncing any conclusive judgment upon them at present, whereas to pronounce a partial judgment might, I think, probably do more harm than good. It is, therefore, my plain duty to say that I adhere to the spirit of the words I used at the commencement of the Session; and, on the other hand, it is likewise my duty to say for myself, and for any that I may be supposed to represent, that, of course, at the present time we must retain our full and absolute liberty both in the mass and in the detail of the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman. Still, I will go one step beyond what I have stated in respect of the speech that has been made and of the propositions that are before us. I think that that speech was a very frank, a very lucid, and a very able statement. The right hon. Gentleman stated that he thought that the Government had founded their proposals upon principles which are both broad and deep, and he laid a claim upon the favourable consideration of the House. Well, I do not think that, taking the statement of the right hon. Gentleman as a whole in the claims that he made, it was an unjust or immodest statement. I think, undoubtedly, that he and his Colleagues have had to apply themselves to a combination of subjects so varied, so diversified, so complex, and so weighty that it would be difficult, perhaps, to name any measure which has been submitted to Parliament in which there has been greater difficulty in bringing into a focus such a multitude of topics so necessary to be connected, and yet presenting so many difficulties in establishing a connection. Undoubtedly, as respecting many important portions of the statement before us, it is only just that I should say that the Government have addressed themselves to the consideration of these points in a spirit which is large, bold, and just; and, so far as these portions go, I cannot but believe that I am expressing the general sentiment in what I have said. The reservation of liberty which I have made I must repeat; but I do not think that it would have been just to have allowed the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman to have gone forth to the world without making frankly, and at once, the admission that in the plan he has proposed—whether or not to be good or bad as a whole, or whether or not in its details or its main details it can be supported—there are embodied many principles the acceptance of which, as coming from the right hon. Gentleman and his Colleagues, is a very important fact in the history of Parliamentary legislation. The good and profit of these principles I should be sorry that Parliament and the country should lose through the existence of any grudging or ungenerous spirit on the part of those who sit separate from the Party with which the right Gentleman belongs.

SIR RICHARD PAGET (Somerset, Wells) said, it was with great satisfaction that he had listened to the views expressed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). He, in common with the right hon. Gentleman, felt that some liberty of action must be retained by those who wished to facilitate the settlement of this extremely difficult question. He ventured to say that no more weighty measure had ever been introduced into that House than the present. It was a measure bristling with details; and he congratulated the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) on the evident success he had so far achieved. He took this opportunity of expressing his satisfaction that at last a Government had been found ready to deal with a difficulty so long recognized, and with evils under which the counties had so long suffered. He looked forward with pleasure to the great benefit which local ratepayers were to derive from Imperial taxation, and which he understood would amount in 1889 to £1,700,000 and in 1890 to no less than £3,000,000. That of itself was an enormous advance on the action of any previous Government, and one that he heartily rejoiced at. There were, however, one or two questions that he would venture to ask the right hon. Gentleman. In the first place, were the present Highway Boards to continue to exercise the powers and authority which they now possessed with the exception of those with reference to main roads? Then, with regard to the Police, was it intended to leave it to the new Authority to determine what the number of the Police Forces should be, the rates to be paid, and the manner in which they were to be equipped, when the subvention for the police and the authority of the Home Office ceased? He desired once more to congratulate his right hon. Friend on the great boldness of conception on which this scheme was founded. He ventured to hope that when the new Authority came into being, placed on the wider and more comprehensive basis of popular election, it would be found in no degree inferior to the Body which it replaced, and that its administration would be entitled to the same amount of praise as that which had been given to the older Body—that in future it would be found to have regard for economical expenditure, and worthy of being pointed to as a Body having the interests of the ratepayers thoroughly at heart.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) said, he understood that the existing Corporation of London was to exist side by side with the General Council for London. If that was so, was the existing Corporation to continue as a separate Council for each district? And, further, he would like to know if the Corporation of the future was to be elected in the same manner as the existing Corporation. If that were so, without arguing the matter, then he would simply say that it constituted a great blot on the Bill. He should have been glad if the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) had had the courage to abolish the magisterial functions of county gentlemen. One of the great grievances of the present system was that the Justices were drawn exclusively from one class; and that, among other things, the game preservers were the men chosen to try the poachers. It seemed to him strange that an anomaly of this kind should have been preserved. The right hon. Gentleman had not even made an allusion to the existence of Ireland, so far as the financial part of the Bill was concerned, which was a question it was said must be left to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman, he thought, might have said that the Bill was extremely complex, and that he was only making a reasonable demand in asking that he should be permitted to confine it, for the moment at least, to this country. If he had done that, Irish Members would have admitted the justice of his case. But he had not alluded to Ireland; and he (Mr. T. P. O'Connor) would be glad to hear from the right hon. Gentleman some explanation of the postponement of Ireland. At a subsequent period this question would, of course, be raised in another form. He should reserve his observations in the meantime, and would merely say that it was for the credit of the House of Commons, the credit of the Ministry, and for the credit of English honour and citizenship generally, that they should have a distinct statement from the Government that the postponement of Ireland was one of time, and not of principle.

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping) said, that with regard to the accusations of the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool (Mr. T. P. O'Connor), he thought that the Government would be able to show, so to speak, a clean bill of health with regard to Ireland, and that the administration of justice might be fairly left in their hands. He had only to ask his right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) one or two questions on points about which he was not quite clear. First, with regard to the police and their management in future. He understood that the police in counties would be transferred to a Body equally elected from the Quarter Sessions Body and from the elected Council. He would like to know whether all direct control of the Home Office was to be taken away, and whether all control of the Police Force in future would be left to the Guardians and the Local Bodies? He thought his right hon. Friend had not told them how he proposed to deal with the Metropolitan Police when he spoke of the police being in the hands of the Home Office. Were the City Police to be amalgamated, or were they to remain a separate force as at present? He had no doubt that the other point which he had to mention would be answered by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If these contributions to which the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board had referred were to go in aid of the locality, how were they in future to divide the contributions of those who resided for half the year in London and the other half in the country?

MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby) said, he wished to ask what was to be the position of boroughs of over 10,000 inhabitants. He thought the right hon. Gentleman had not mentioned boroughs which, like Grimsby, had

30,000 or 40,000 inhabitants, and were not Quarter Sessions boroughs. He should be glad to hear from the right hon. Gentleman some information on that subject. Again he asked for what time the District Committees were to be elected. The right hon. Gentleman had mentioned three years in connection with the County Committee, but he had not named any time with regard to the District Committees. He (Mr. Heneage) presumed the time would be three years, although it was not mentioned. He had no other questions to ask, and it simply remained for him to congratulate the right hon. Gentleman heartily on the measure he had introduced.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.) said, he desired to ask the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, what relation and powers the new Local Authority would have with reference to the Allotment Act of last year, taking into consideration the fact that under the present circumstances that Act was utterly useless and unworkable.

SIR BERNHARD SAMUELSON (Oxfordshire, Banbury) said, the right hon. Gentleman spoke of some grant to school boards which would cease to be paid. He (Sir Bernhard Samuelson) should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he referred to the education grant which was made to school boards, and, if not, what was the grant to which he referred?

MR. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.) said, the right hon. Gentleman had referred to six or seven cities which were to become counties of cities — Liverpool, for instance, was one of them. He desired to ask the right hon. Gentleman if the proposed Council of that county was to be the present Town Council of the city, or was there to be constituted a new body. If the old body—the present Town Council—was to be the Council of the county, would there be some provision with regard to the election of the Council; would there be one election every three years, or would they continue on their present constitution—one member retiring from each ward every third year?

MR. RITCHIE said, he would answer the last question first. The Council of a borough made a county would be the composition of the County Council; it would not have to undergo re-election, and they did not propose in cases of this kind in any way to interfere with the mode of election or with the term for which the Council was re-elected. The hon. Baronet opposite (Sir Bernhard Samuelson) asked him what the Government were proposing to do with respect to boroughs which were not coterminous with sanitary areas? This was one of the questions submitted to the Boundary Commissioners, and it would be their duty to make a report upon it; their report would be submitted to the County Council, who would take the matter into consideration, and deal with it by way of Provisional Orders. His hon. and gallant Friend the Member for South-East Essex (Major Rasch) asked him whether there would be any alteration as to the authority existing at present to administer the Allotments Act? There would, of course, be an alteration. The authority under the Allotments Act was the Sanitary Authority; the Sanitary Authority in rural districts at present was the Guardians. In future the Sanitary Authority in rural districts would be directly elected by the ratepayers, and they would become the authority to administer the Allotments Act. The District Council would be the Sanitary Authority.

SIR RICHARD PAGET: Of how many members will it consist?

MR. RITCHIE said, it was proposed that the County Council should fix the number for each Rural Sanitary Authority. Then he was questioned with regard to the School Board grant. The proposals of the Government had no reference to the grants generally, and only a very small grant to poor School Boards would be involved in their proposals. The hon. Baronet the Member for the Wells Division of Somerset (Sir Richard Paget) had asked him a question in reference to the highways. The District Councils, whether rural or urban, would be the Highway Authorities of the future, and of course the existing authorities would cease to exercise their powers. The hon. Baronet also asked him—and a similar question was put by his hon. Friend the Member for the Epping Division of Essex (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson)—whether the control of the police by the Home Office was to cease under the new state of things? No, it was not; the Home Office would still exercise supervision over the police, they would still have to give their certificate, and where they found that an efficient police force was not maintained in accordance with the efficiency necessary to obtain a certificate, they would have power to call upon the County Authority to remedy the defect. The hon. Baronet also put to him a question upon another point; he suggested that the rates might automatically increase. Where would the increased revenue be found? He anticipated that, even apart from the ordinary and constant increase of revenue to be derived from all these licences, and also from the sources from which personal contributions came, there would be added this expectation of increase, that the Local Authorities within the counties having a direct interest in the amount of revenue raised from the licences, would look very sharply after the collection of the licence duties. The hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool (Mr. T. P. O'Connor) asked him what were the proposals in reference to the position of the City of London. The hon. Gentleman was aware that they proposed in the Bill only to deal with the question of the County Authority in London which was to be elected by all parts of London. He (Mr. Ritchie) stated that they had other plans with reference to districts. Those plans were not before Parliament, but he might inform the hon. Gentleman that so far as the City of London was concerned it would occupy within the County of London precisely the same position as a Quarter Sessions borough would continue to occupy in an ordinary county.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR said, he was extremely anxious to know how the London Authority was to be elected?

Mr. RITCHIE said, they did not propose to deal with the smaller areas in London in the present Bill at all, and he did not think the hon. Gentleman would expect him to state how they proposed to deal with the City of London when it came to be considered as a District Council with reference to itself.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR said, he was particularly anxious to know whether the elections in London would be conducted on the popular principle?

Mr. RITCHIE said, he was afraid he had not made himself understood; they recognized the importance of that particular branch of their work, but as he stated in his speech they did not feel able to deal with that question in this Bill because it would unduly have overweighted it. They proposed to deal not only with the City of London but with other areas in London subsequently. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. T. P. O'Connor) answered his own question when he said the Bill was one which did not profess to deal with Ireland. He (Mr. Ritchie) should be quite out of Order if he attempted to state to the House what were the proposals which they hoped at some future time to make respecting Ireland. Then a question was asked with reference to the City Police—whether they were to be amalgamated? The House knew that the City had always maintained its own police, and it had always declined to submit to the supervision of the Home Office. That being so, they did not propose to include the City of London among the police that were to be maintained at the cost of the county. The question the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Heneage) asked him was, what would be the position of boroughs, not Quarter Sessions boroughs, with a population of over 10,000? They would be precisely in the position they at present occupied. All municipal boroughs would retain their powers and their duties other than those which were excepted exactly as they possessed them now.

Mr. HENEAGE asked if they would retain the power of licensing?

Mr. RITCHIE said, that he thought he had told the House clearly that such boroughs would exercise all the duties they exercised now other than those which were excepted. They had not got the power of licensing now except through their Justices. They were powers which would be in the future exercised by the County Council.

Mr. HENEAGE: Then borough Justices will be superseded by County Justices?

Mr. RITCHIE said, that the hon. Gentleman must be aware that the Goverment proposed to take away licensing as a portion of the administrative functions they took away from the Justices. Of course, the Justices of Quarter Sessions boroughs will, in common with

Justices of counties, lose their licensing powers—[Mr. HENEAGE: And the City of London?]—Yes, and the Justices of the City of London. A question was asked as to the mode of election to the District Councils. In the multiplicity of the questions with which he had had to deal, he had forgotten to say that the District Councils would be elected for the same time, and under similar circumstances as Municipal Councils; two-thirds would retire annually. He had now, he thought, answered all the questions put to him, but he could not sit down without expressing his thanks to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) for the kind and handsome way in which he had spoken of the way in which he (Mr. Ritchie) had performed his duty to-night. He assured the right hon. Gentleman that, however much they differed on political questions, he very greatly appreciated the compliment which the right hon. Gentleman had been good enough to pay him to-night.

MR. W. BECKETT (Notts, Bassetlaw) said, he desired to address a question to the right hon. Gentleman relating to finance. The present County Authorities raised capital by mortgages on the rates, and that was a very cumbersome mode of raising money, and it would be a great convenience to all if the right hon. Gentleman would introduce a clause in the Bill empowering County Authorities to create a county stock. Such a stock would be very popular in every county, and its existence would save a great deal of the trouble and expense connected with the present system of raising money.

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan) said, that his right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) had dealt with the Municipal Authorities and great Local Boards, but there were other authorities which gave great trouble in the great controversy upon local government, and they were the Improvement Commissioners appointed under Acts of Parliament. The condition of these bodies was extremely anomalous, and he (Mr. F. S. Powell) would greatly rejoice to see an end put to their corporate existence. At present they might be entirely abolished by a Provisional Order which gave power to alter a local Act, but he was anxious to know whether the Government would not take advantage of this great opportunity, and put an end once and for ever to these most anomalous, and, he thought, in many cases most inconvenient authorities? He hoped he might be allowed as one who had had the honour of being for eight years a member of the London vestry to congratulate the Government on taking in hand the cause of local reform in London. He was sure that whatever were the opinions of hon. Gentlemen who took part in this debate, they would all agree in thanking the Government for the courage with which they had dealt with this part of this very great problem. He had rather hoped that in the course of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman they would have heard some more in detail respecting local areas. This was, of course, too large a subject to discuss at this late period of a preliminary debate, but he hoped that in the course of a few years the anomalies in local boundaries would be terminated, and that there would be some symmetrical system. He trusted the right hon. Gentleman did not intend that the areas for local government should hereafter be equal in size or in population. For political purpose no doubt areas of the same uniform size were desirable, but for administration local circumstances differ so much, and there is so much diversity in the local wants, that variety rather than uniformity should be sought. He could, if time permitted, have given illustrations in support of his view, but he thought that it was right in the course of a discussion like this to be as brief as possible, and merely to indicate a few leading ideas which had occurred to his mind.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) said, he desired to put one question to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, and that was whether there would be any proposals in the Bill affecting the present government of parishes? Whether the power now possessed by Vestries would be altered by the Bill, and whether any powers at present existing or any other powers within the parishes would be given by the clauses of the Bill to the new District Councils?

MR. JASPER MORE (Shropshire, Ludlow) said, he wished to ask if the right hon. Gentleman intended to extend the disturnpiked roads grant to those roads disturnpiked since 1870? He wished, too, that the right hon. Gentleman would kindly state what was to be the position of those small boroughs which he alluded to—namely, those with a population under 3,000 which still had a mayor and corporation of their own? He desired also to ask the right hon. Gentleman if he would consider whether he could cause a plan to be prepared showing the amount of the revenue derivable from the licences which would fall to the lot of the several county districts?

Mr. LLEWELLYN (Somerset, N.) said, he agreed that it was somewhat inconsiderate to further ply the right hon. Gentleman with questions, although there were one or two points upon which he would like further information. He could not refrain from congratulating the right hon. Gentleman and the Government upon the measure they had introduced, and he could assure the right hon. Gentleman of the approval which would be felt all over the country of the mode of relief he had suggested with regard to the payment of capitation grant for indoor poor. The proposals of the Government in that respect would not only be received with great satisfaction by all Poor Law Guardians, but would add very considerably to the economical carrying out of the Poor Law. The right hon. Gentleman dealt in his speech with the subject of the constitution of the proposed County Boards. He (Mr. Llewellyn) knew that the minds of a great number of people for a considerable time had been exercised as to what part the Justices of the Peace in counties were to play, and he was heartily glad the right hon. Gentleman had tackled the matter in the way he had. He had no doubt certain magistrates would feel somewhat disappointed and perhaps concerned that they were not to be members of the Board by virtue of their position, but the majority of the people in the country would be thoroughly satisfied with the way these Boards were to be constituted—namely, to be purely elective. He did not think any magistrates who took interest in county matters need feel at all that their services would no longer be required. Where magistrates took to the work, and stuck to the work, and were fit for the work of Boards of Guardians and similar bodies, they would find that on account of their leisure and of their fitness plenty of employment would be put in their way. His own idea was that not only on the District Boards but on the County Councils the magistrates who hitherto had taken an active part in the administration of the Poor Law and in county matters would find plenty of work, and that their services would be appreciated and sought.

Mr. J. G. TALBOT (Oxford University) said, he was very unwilling to trouble the right hon. Gentleman with an additional question, but there was one point which he had altogether omitted to notice. It was commonly thought that the County Council was to be charged with the great question of elementary education. The right hon. Gentleman omitted to deal with that subject. If he would state at once what it was proposed to do, it would be very interesting to those who were engaged in the question.

Mr. J. C. STEVENSON (South Shields) said, he wished to thoroughly understand what was the authority which would regulate the matter of Sunday Closing in ordinary large boroughs which were not Quarter Sessions boroughs—whether the existing borough magistrates would settle the matter, or whether the authority would be the County Justices in the settlement of the question of Sunday closing?

Mr. RITCHIE said, that he explained to the House that the whole question of dealing with licensing and the sale of intoxicating liquors would be entrusted to the County Council. His hon. Friend the Member for Oxford University (Mr. J. G. Talbot) asked him a question respecting education. He was sorry if he had omitted to state what was to be done in that respect. He had intended to state that it was not proposed to deal with the question in this Bill. The hon. Member opposite (Mr. Channing) had questioned him with regard to parishes. That was one of the matters with which the Government would have been glad to deal had they had time, but they did not think they could deal in this Bill with the many questions arising in connection with parishes. Their size varied so much that no measure dealing with parishes could have dealt with them in a satisfactory manner unless there was some means by which amalgamations could have been brought about. The County Councils, he hoped, would consider matters of that kind for themselves, and suggest in many cases alterations of the law which might be readily made. The hon. Member for the Ludlow Division of Shropshire (Mr. Jasper More) asked whether they proposed to extend the grant for main roads. No; they proposed to leave the question exactly as it stood now, and so far as this and many other matters were concerned he might say they did not propose to alter the existing law. Their main object was to create new authorities and to transfer to them the administration of the existing law. If they had begun to amend the various laws connected with local management in this Bill, they would have made it such a Bill as it would have been totally impracticable to pass in a Session. His hon. Friend the Member for Wigan (Mr. F. S. Powell) asked what they proposed to do with the Improvement Commissioners? He did not think it necessary to allude to Improvement Act areas as well as Local Board areas, but, of course, what he said with reference to Local Board areas applied also to Improvement Act areas. They would become District Councils elected in precisely the same way as all other District Councils and the Improvement Commissioners would disappear. His hon. Friend also asked whether the areas for Local Government were to be equal in population. As far as possible they did not propose to make any alteration whatever in the areas of local districts.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) said, the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) was to be congratulated upon the admirable manner in which he had introduced his measure to the House. He could not help, however, expressing his regret that they had not heard from the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), or from the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, some words about the simultaneity in the laws relating to England and Ireland. The Government were to be congratulated upon the measure, speaking, of course, as it were upon the first blush. In his opinion, the measure showed a considerable amount of expansion upon the part of the Government, and he did not think he would be accused of ill-feeling when he said that he and his Friends expected that some reference would have been made to Ireland. There was no Government more charged with the duty of extending Local Government in Ireland than the Unionist or Conservative Government. The Irish Members had expected, as compensation for the rejection of the measures in which they were specially interested, that the Government would drop some word of comfort to them on the great subject of Local Government, because they had been told over and over again that while the Government were opposed to setting up a separate Parliament in Dublin, they felt that something was necessary to be done to extend the same principles of Local Government which existed in England to Ireland. Speaking for himself, he should have been very glad if the head of the Irish Office had seen his way to introduce for Ireland a measure as promising—he did not say it was sufficient—as the measure the right hon. Gentleman had introduced for England and Wales. He admired the facility of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board for dealing with the particular questions of areas, boundaries, and matters of that kind, and he could not help thinking that if the right hon. Gentleman could have projected his mind into the question as regarded Ireland he would have found there was not a single difficulty in his way. In extending this measure almost as it stood to Ireland, the right hon. Gentleman would have found no difficulty as regarded areas or boundaries. If any person acquainted with the subject were given two or three hours he could easily have made this Bill applicable to Ireland, and therefore he (Mr. T. M. Healy) greatly regretted that the Government had not seen fit to introduce a Bill for Ireland. The noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), speaking some time ago upon Local Government, spoke of the great advantage which would be gained by his dealing with the question as regarded England; but he (Mr. T. M. Healy) did not think there was any principle—of course, there were some omissions in the Bill which out to be inserted if it were applied to Ireland—which they would not have gladly seen extended to Ireland. He had, however, one complaint to make from a financial point of view. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) would soon have an opportunity of stating his financial proposals, and, of course, he did not expect the right hon. Gentleman to state now exactly what he proposed to do; but they had seen reliefs extended to the local taxpayers of England and Wales, especially in regard to disturnpiked roads, while nothing of the kind had been done in the case of Ireland. He was sure he could appeal with confidence to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon this point, as being a point entirely outside the domain of Irish politics. If they were to be denied for 12 months or two years, or Heaven knew how long, the benefits of local self-government, he trusted that at some period of this discussion the right hon. Gentleman would be good enough to inform them what was the measure of financial relief the Irish people were about to have extended to them under his scheme. He knew that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer on finance had no politics, and he asked him and the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) to bear in mind the important fact that the people of Ireland desired the relief to be in aid of the county cess instead of the poor rate. He did not know how it was proposed to deal with the question of the poor rate in this country, but he presumed that the relief afforded would be relief to the occupier. But, be that as it might, the disparity between England and Ireland on this important point was so great that the 4*d.* it was proposed to grant by way of relief to the occupiers in this country would in Ireland suffice for the maintenance of all the paupers. But it was proposed to relieve the local taxpayers of England in respect to a whole series of burdens. Where was the relief of a similar kind for Ireland? He was sure he should not be asking too much if he asked the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to anticipate in some slight degree the Statement he must make in the course of two or three days by saying where was the equivalent relief they in Ireland were to get. He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board upon the breadth of his scheme, and also on having included the women householders. He knew that in this country women suffrage was supposed to be a Tory proposal; but in Ireland they would be very glad to have women voters. It was, unfortunately, the fact that women householders in Ireland had increased to a large extent by reason of the fact that the landlord party, instead of recognizing the eldest son as the tenant in case of the father's decease, had recognized the widow. In that way Ireland had been denied much masculine franchise, and, there being no feminine franchise to take its place, real occupiers had been denied altogether the right of a vote. The scheme of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board seemed a courageous scheme, and entitled to a large measure of success. It seemed to him that the Government had introduced it as a House of Common's scheme rather than as a Party scheme, and that they were disposed, if they were beaten by their own Party, to rely upon the good sense of the House of Commons at large. While, of course, he did not bind himself in the least degree, he was bound to say that if there were Gentlemen upon the Government side of the House who were not prepared to support the right hon. Gentleman in his proposals upon what might be called the licensed victuallers' taxation portion of the scheme, the right hon. Gentleman might rely upon a large amount of general support. Indeed, he believed that the President of the Local Government Board would find himself supported upon the main principles of his Bill by the general sense of the House as a whole. In Ireland they took considerable interest in the question of licensing. The Nationalist Party had been attacked as being more or less the publicans' party, but there was no man less of a publican party man than he was. At the same time, he confessed that he was not, as at present advised, in favour of extinguishing a publican's licence, unless upon grounds of fault on the part of the publican himself, without giving compensation, although it was for the State to say whether higher licence duties, having necessarily a restricting effect, should not be imposed. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local

Government Board would probably find considerable diversity of opinion upon this particular subject; but as far as they in Ireland were concerned—and they had been charged with being the publicans' champions—he would be glad if the licensing proposals were extended to Ireland. He thought the Government inclined to act reasonably on the whole question, and he trusted that when they came to deal with Ireland they would be animated with the same spirit.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. and learned Gentleman cannot discuss in any detail the circumstances of Ireland.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said, that perhaps he might be allowed to say, in conclusion, that the Irish Members did expect some statement from the Government with regard to the question of finance at least.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square) said, he would not follow the hon. and learned Member over what he might call the broader part of his speech, but confine his remarks to the question of finance. The Government were duly sensible of the importance of the question of finance. It was impossible for his right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie), considering the enormous range of subjects he had to deal with in his speech, to deal also with the question of Irish and Scotch finance in relation to the new distribution of Imperial and local taxation. He (Mr. Goschen) could assure the hon. and learned Gentleman and his Friends that he had given the greatest possible attention to the question as to how Scotland and Ireland could be treated simultaneously with England as regarded the question of finance. The hon. and learned Gentleman would not expect him to anticipate the Statement he would have to make on Monday next; but he might now tell the hon. and learned Gentleman he (Mr. Goschen) started from this basis—"No change in the contributions made to English local finance, and no variation in the system of levying taxation, shall bear prejudicially either upon Scotland or upon Ireland." He maintained that Scotland and Ireland should derive the same benefits as were conferred by this measure upon the English. As to the mode by which that might be accomplished, he trusted the hon. and learned Gentleman would not expect him to speak. He only spoke generally. Full financial justice should be done, so far as the Government could possibly do it, to all parts of the Empire.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.) said, that the observations of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer illustrated very strongly indeed the inconvenience of the course adopted by the Government. They could not give Ireland any terms in regard to local finance which would at all equal the terms given to England, because of the manner in which local finance was administered in Ireland. The administration of local finance in Ireland would simply result in corruption, jobbery, and waste. He could not understand how satisfactory relief was to be given to local finance in Ireland as long as the administration of local finance in that country remained in the hands of the present authorities. That being so, he thought the probability was that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when coming to deal with this matter, would find that he had to face a very considerable and difficult problem. He thought it right to point out that it was the custom for a Minister of the Crown, in introducing any great or wide measure of reform dealing with England and Wales alone, to state to the House in the opening portion of his statement the grounds on which the Government confined the measure to England and Wales, and did not extend it to Scotland or Ireland. If that had been so in the past, it seemed to him that the reason for the continuance of the custom by the present Unionist Government was tenfold stronger, because what was it they were told was the object of the present Government? They were told over and over again that the object of the Government was to sink as rapidly as they could all distinction between the Three Kingdoms, and to treat England, Ireland, and Scotland, as one and the same United Kingdom. That was matter of common statement on public platforms, and it was considered a strange thing that a Minister, so far from advancing in that direction, should distinctly depart from the custom by introducing a great measure like this, confining its operation to England and Wales, and omitting to make the smallest reference to Ireland, and omitting to say on what grounds Ireland was excluded from the operation of the Bill. He had not the slightest intention to enter into this question in detail. An opportunity undoubtedly would arise hereafter on which the whole of this great and vast question could be discussed at great length. At the same time, he thought it would be unreasonable to expect that this opportunity should be allowed to pass without a word or two being said upon the Bill. What was it that the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board said? He said that one of the remarkable features with regard to this great measure of reform was that there existed in England no great or pressing demand for the measure at all, and he said that it was a very sound Constitutional principle to bring in a measure of reform before the public demand for it became very pressing or urgent, in order that they might secure for the measure that amount of calm consideration which the Bill deserved. That was a very good principle undoubtedly, but it was one which had not been generally acted upon by the Tory Party in the past. Did the right hon. Gentleman think how that statement was likely to be viewed by Irishmen? The statement was viewed by them as an argument of unanswerable force that the Irish Bill should be introduced first.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I must remind the hon. Member that his observations are entirely irrelevant to the subject of the introduction of an English Bill. As the hon. Gentleman has himself pointed out, he will have an opportunity of discussing this question at another time. He is quite out of Order, upon the introduction of a Bill relating to England and Wales, to make such constant reference to Ireland.

MR. DILLON asked if he would be in Order in referring to the question why Ireland should be excluded from the Bill?

MR. SPEAKER: I think it is out of Order on the introduction of this Bill.

MR. WOODALL (Hanley) said, he wished to ask when the Bill would be printed?

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERMENT BOARD (Mr. LONG) (Wilts, Devizes): Early next week.

MR. STANSFELD (Halifax) said, he would like to know on what day it was proposed to take the second reading?

MR. LONG said, that, in the absence of his right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board, he could not say when the second reading would be taken.

MR. STANSFELD said, he rose in no spirit of opposition to the Bill, for he admired a great part of its construction. He thought, however, it was desirable that full time should be given for the consideration of the Bill, not only by hon. Members of the House, but by the country at large. He believed that if full time could be given now, it would prove, on the whole, an economy of time. He did not think—judging from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, and judging from the nature of the Bill itself—that there was any intention to smuggle the Bill through the House. If it went through the House it must go through on its merits, and it would require all the support it could get. For all these reasons he hoped that ample and sufficient opportunity would be given for the consideration of the Bill by the country.

BARON DIMSDALE (Herts, Hitchin) said, he thought it was very desirable that the Bill should be thoroughly discussed at Quarter Sessions. Nobody would be so much affected by the Bill as Quarter Sessions, and therefore it was very important that they should have an opportunity of considering the Bill in all its bearings. The next Quarter Sessions took place in Easter week, and therefore he trusted that the second reading would not be taken until after the Easter Recess.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Ritchie, Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Secretary Matthews, and Mr. Long.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 182.]

SUNDAY CLOSING ACTS (IRELAND).

NOMINATION OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland be a Member of the said Committee."

Mr. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) said, it would be remembered by the Members of the Government that this Committee was granted at the desire of those who considered that the working of the Irish Sunday Closing Acts ought to be investigated—it was at the desire of people, some of whom believed that the Act had not fulfilled the intentions of its promoters, and some of whom believed that it had. It was thought, on all sides, that there should be a strict and impartial investigation; and his contention was that the Committee, as it appeared upon the Paper, was incompetent to make an impartial investigation. Why did he make that statement? For the reason, first and foremost, that there were only four Members of the Party to which he belonged who were proposed as Members of the Committee. The Irish Nationalist Party was only to furnish one-fourth of the Committee, yet it represented five-sixths of the people of Ireland. That was not a fair representation of the Party representing such a large number of the people of Ireland. Again, there were five Members of the Committee taken from above the Gangway on the Opposition side of the House. Those five Members were men who were actually pledged to support Sunday closing and the suppression of the liquor traffic in all its phases. The hon. Member for Mid Derbyshire (Mr. Jacoby) was against the liquor traffic. The hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Theodore Fry) and the hon. Member for Scarborough (Mr. Rowntree) were also opposed to the liquor traffic. They were very pronounced upon the subject. He made no objection to the hon. Member for South Londonderry (Mr. Lea), because he had a right to be on the Committee, inasmuch as there was a Bill referred to that Committee in which he was interested. But there was another Member above the Gangway whom it was proposed to put on the Committee, and that was the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell). How was it possible to expect that the hon. Member for South Tyrone could bring to the investigation of this subject an impartial mind? He it was who brought up the evidence and conducted the agitation which produced the Sunday Closing Bill. It was proposed to put upon the Committee a Gentleman who was responsible for the present measure; and was it reasonable or human to expect that he would bring to the investigation of the operation of that Bill a fair and impartial mind? It was not at all to be expected that the hon. Gentleman would go into the Committee to smother his own child; and he (Mr. J. O'Connor) questioned the good taste of the hon. Gentleman in allowing his name to appear among the Members of the Committee. He trusted the hon. Gentleman would reconsider his decision in that respect; and he hoped the Government would also reconsider their decision—he trusted that the hon. Gentleman would have the good taste to retire from the Committee, and that the Government would accept his resignation. There were some Members also proposed from the other side of the House. There was the hon. and learned Solicitor General for Ireland (Mr. Madden). The hon. and learned Gentleman had a fair and impartial mind; and he (Mr. J. O'Connor) had no doubt he would use—at any rate, he hoped he would use—his best endeavour to come to a correct decision on the matter. He made no objection to the presence of the hon. and learned Gentleman upon the Committee.

Sir WILFRID LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth) rose to Order. He asked if it was not the Rule, when one name was nominated for a Select Committee, that the remarks made should be upon that particular name?

Mr. SPEAKER: Do I understand the hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. O'Connor) objects to the name of the Solicitor General for Ireland, because the Question I have to put is—"That the Solicitor General be a Member of the Select Committee?"

Mr. J. O'CONNOR said, he thought it would expedite matters if he said now what he had to say with regard to the constitution of the Committee.

Mr. SPEAKER: It would be more regular for the hon. Gentleman to object to any particular name.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR said that that would only multiply his speech.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. William Johnston be a Member of the said Committee."

Mr. J. O'CONNOR said he desired to take exception to the name. They all knew the temperament of the hon. Member for South Belfast. The hon. Gentleman was a man of a very enthusiastic cast of mind. He brought to bear upon all subjects he contemplated a very enthusiastic temperament, to say the least about it, and he had made himself the champion of measures introduced for the purpose of doing injustice to classes of people who had been acknowledged by law. The hon. Member for South Belfast was a man who, in the measures he had introduced in the House, had never considered the justice of the claims of the people who had vested interests in the liquor traffic to compensation in case they were deprived of their means of livelihood. The hon. Gentleman had shown himself almost a fanatic in the matter. He (Mr. J. O'Connor) therefore considered the hon. Gentleman was an unfit and improper person to serve on this Committee, and he charged the Government with not having a very just desire to evoke and elicit the truth in suggesting the hon. Member for South Belfast as a Member of the Committee of Inquiry.

MR. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) said, he agreed with his hon. Friend that a Committee of Inquiry such as this ought to be thoroughly impartial, and ought to be free from any bias in any direction whatsoever. So far as he could gather from the antecedents of the hon. Member for South Belfast (Mr. Johnston), he did not think the hon. Member could bring to this inquiry a fair and clear mind. The hon. Member had preconceived notions antagonistic to the trade that was to be brought under review. He (Mr. P. M'Donald) considered that no Member of the House who had preconceived notions ought to be nominated on the Committee unless his conclusions were considered to be thoroughly impartial, and he heartily supported his hon. Friend in objecting to the name of Mr. William Johnston.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.) said, that perhaps on this particular Motion he ought to say a few words with respect to the general constitution of the Committee. He did not know whether he should be in Order in——

MR. SPEAKER: The right hon. Gentleman would not be in Order. We have now arrived at a particular name—the name of the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Belfast, and the discussion must be confined to the qualifications of that Gentleman to serve upon the Committee.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Motion made, and Question, "That Mr. Agg-Gardner, Mr. Gent-Davis, Mr. Muntz, Mr. Rowntree, Mr. Jacoby, Mr. Theodore Fry, Mr. Tomlinson, and Mr. Lea be Members of the said Committee," put, and *agreed to.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. T. W. Russell be a Member of the said Committee."

MR. J. O'CONNOR said, that a while ago, in his general observations, he stated what he wished to repeat now—namely, that he considered it impossible for the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) to bring to the investigation a fair and impartial mind. He said a while ago, and he repeated it now, for the benefit of those who had come into the House since that time, that the hon. Member for South Tyrone was a man who was most engaged in producing the measure they were to investigate. He was the man who organized the evidence that was adduced before the Committee who investigated the question originally, and he was the man who agitated the subject as the official of the Association that promoted the measure—he was the representative of the United Kingdom Alliance in Ireland. He (Mr. J. O'Connor) maintained that, under all these circumstances, the hon. Member was utterly incompetent to bring to the investigation of the subject a fair and impartial mind. While this Committee was in course of construction he stated these facts to the Whips of the Parties, and he asked for a fairly constituted Committee. He asked for a fair proportion of hon. Members sitting below the Gangway, but they had only been granted one-fourth of the constitution of the Committee, although they represented five-sixths of the population of Ireland. He protested against the name of the hon. Member for South Tyrone being included in the Committee, and he repeated the charge he made a while ago, that he did not think that it was consistent with the best taste possible that the hon. Gentleman should allow himself to be nominated for the Committee. He was an hon. Member of the House, no doubt, but still he defied the hon. Gentleman to bring to the investigation of this subject that fair and impartial mind which it was necessary to do, in order to investigate the truth upon this very large and vexed question in Ireland. He had no object in these remarks except the eliciting of the truth. He had no connection whatever with the liquor traffic, but he had heard it stated in Ireland that there was much hardship due to the existence of the Sunday Closing Act, and he was anxious to find out whether that was so or not. [*Cries of* "Order, order!"] He was arguing upon the constitution of the Committee.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not the Question before the House. The Question is the qualification of the hon. Member for South Tyrone to be a Member of the Committee.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR said, he had stated his reasons for considering the hon. Gentleman disqualified from sitting upon the Committee. He protested against the hon. Member being a Member of the Committee, and he should certainly go to a Division if the Motion was persevered in.

Sir WILFRID LAWSON said, he thought it was very extraordinary that these names should be opposed. One would think that the Committee had been brought together in an improper way—that it had been got together by Peter the Packer himself. He (Sir Wilfrid Lawson) did not apprehend anything of that kind. The Committee had been got up by the hon. Member who was objecting to some of these names. The House would recollect that last year it was at the instance of Gentlemen who took a great interest in the liquor trade that this Committee was assented to, and that it was accepted with great acclamation and delight by those opposed to the trade. So far they were all harmonious. The publicans alleged that this Act had caused great drinking in Ireland, and upon that ground they opposed it. That was one of the most unselfish things he had ever heard of. But whether it was unselfish or not, the publicans took a very strong view against the Act and its working. Now, if anyone looked at the Committee, they would see what men the publicans had got upon it. Anyone who knew as much about the matter as he did must know that those men could be thoroughly trusted. There were upon the Committee four or five of the staunchest publicans—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Baronet must confine himself to the qualification of Mr. T. W. Russell.

Sir WILFRID LAWSON said, he was sorry if he had transgressed in any way, and he would speak of the hon. Member for South Tyrone. The hon. Member was objected to because he knew more about this question than anybody else. He was the man who had the most to do with carrying the Sunday Closing Act through the House, and, therefore, he was the very man to inquire into how it had worked. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Yes; quite as much as the men who opposed it. Those who objected to the hon. Member being a Member of the Committee said—"Oh, no; do not let him come on the Committee, because he has strong opinions." Had not everyone strong opinions on some subject or other? Then they said—"But he is not impartial." In his (Sir Wilfrid Lawson's) opinion, the hon. Member for South Tyrone was the most impartial of men. One day he was writing letters in favour of the Irish tenants, and the next day he was voting with the Irish landlords. If any man could see two sides of a question better than his hon. Friend, he did not know where to find him. He objected altogether to the idea of keeping people off Committees because they had opinions. Everyone had opinions. If they were to take people who had no opinions at all, they would have a Committee of idiots. He did not agree with his hon. Friends in objecting to the hon. Member for South Tyrone. It was a great reflection upon the hon. Member to say that he was not fit to serve on this Committee. The Committee was not to legislate, but it was to make inquiries, to get hold of the facts, and report them to the House, and there was no one better fitted for that purpose than the hon. Member for South Tyrone. He heartily supported the hon. Member's name.

Question put, and *agreed to*.

Remaining names, Mr. John O'Connor, Mr. Tuite, Mr. Biggar, and Mr. Peter Macdodald, *agreed to*.

MR. J. O'CONNOR said, he desired to move that two more Members be added to the Committee.

MR. SPEAKER: That is not possible. There has been no Notice given of it.

MR. J. O'CONNOR: I give Notice of it now.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member can put it on the Paper in the usual way if he wishes to add to the number of the Committee, which is now 15.

Power to send for persons, papers, and records; Five to be the quorum.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY TO THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND [SALARY, &c.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That it is expedient to make regulations for the office of Under Secretary and of Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland."—(*Mr. Arthur Balfour.*)

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) said, he had been very much surprised indeed to see this subject on the Paper, because, after the discussion which took place a few nights ago, he had felt, and other hon. Members had felt, that the Government would first have dealt with a matter of a more urgent character—that, namely, which related to allowances to divisional magistrates in Ireland. The Government had admitted that they were bound to make every possible exertion, consistently with the progress of Public Business, to push forward a measure on that subject; and the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) had said that, if there was time, such a Bill would be passed. There was time at that moment to proceed with the Bill; but the measure was not forthcoming, and in its place they had the present highly contentious and obnoxious proposal. There were unanswerable arguments in favour of postponing the consideration of this Motion and pressing forward more urgent Business. They knew, on the personal authority of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman), that he was proud of serving his country without any salary at all. Only the other day the right hon. and gallant Gentleman stated that he was proud to work for 14 hours a-day without receiving a shilling for his labour. The proposal was of an eminently contentious character; and whilst the Gladstonians, the Irish Nationalists, and the Liberal Unionists were all hostile to it, not a single non-official Member of the Tory Party had spoken in support of it, and there had been no strong expression of opinion from any Member of the Government, except the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, in its favour. Was it not absurd that the time of the House should be wasted in the discussion of a Bill which had not received the support of a single Irish Member on either side of the House? Under the circumstances of the case, the Government were bound either to withdraw the Bill or to keep it back until they were in a position to show the Committee that it had some measure of support from some class of people in Ireland. It was said that an Under Secretary was needed to perform certain Parliamentary duties, and that he would be expected also to discharge certain extra-Parliamentary duties. These extra-Parliamentary duties were never mentioned until the other day. Until the other day it was supposed that the Parliamentary Under Secretary was simply a Question-answering machine; and if it took him 18 hours a-day, as it seemed to do, to prepare for answering Questions, it was difficult to see how he was to find time for the performance of other duties. But it would be well that the Committee should know what case the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland could make out in favour of the contention that his duties were of so absorbing a character that he could not reply to Questions put in the House. There was no Irish Business going on now, and, according to the right hon. Gentleman's own account—although he (Mr. Dillon) did not believe that account to be true—Ireland had been reduced to a state of absolute peace and quiet. There really seemed never to have been an Irish Secretary who had less to do than had the right hon. Gentleman at the present time. He protested against the claim of the Government that fresh Offices, with salaries of £1,000 a-year attached to them, could be created in that House without any real excuse. It seemed that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Parliamentary Under Secretary (Colonel King-Harman) was to be placed at the head of the Local Government Board in Ireland—in point of fact, that he was to be the Local Government Board himself. This made the appointment all the more objectionable, because that Board had been condemned by everybody who had ever looked into the question. It had been condemned by all of them who belonged to the National Party, and it was not possible to get a single Irish Liberal Unionist to defend it. It was two years ago since the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) stood up in his place as Chancellor of the Exchequer and deprecated all further criticism on the point, on the ground of the express pledge which had been given on behalf of the Government that the Board would be swept away on the earliest possible opportunity. That was the past history of the Irish Local Government Board. It stood condemned in the mind of every intelligent man who had studied its working. Well, it was now proposed to place at the head of this Board—which enjoyed anything but the confidence of the public—the man who, above public men in Ireland, enjoyed the smallest share of the confidence of the Irish people. He (Mr. Dillon), on behalf of the people of Ireland, protested against the right hon. and gallant Gentleman being imported into the Irish Local Government Board, which was bad enough at present without such an acquisition. It was composed of men who were incompetent, and men who were shipped over into that country in order that berths might be found for them; but, bad as it was, and intensely as the Irish people disliked it, public feeling against it would be immensely intensified if they were to have at the head of it the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet. He (Mr. Dillon) maintained that if they wished to increase the unpopularity of this system of Boards in Ireland they could not possibly hit upon a better method than by placing the right hon. and gallant Gentleman at the head of this Board. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman was not only unfitted for the post by intense unpopularity in Ireland and for the reasons already explained, but he was unfitted for it for another reason. What training had he had in the administration of local government in Ireland? None; and yet he was to be put at the head of a complicated system of local government in Ireland, a system to which there was no analogy whatever in England. They were to put at the head of such a Board a man who, as far as was known to the Irish people, had absolutely no knowledge whatever of the administration of a Public Office. At this advanced period of his life the right hon. and gallant Gentleman wished to undertake the duties of this important Public Office, and to administer a large part of the affairs of Ireland without the smallest degree of experience, or without there being any reason in the public mind for supposing he was fit to do work of the kind. Everyone in Ireland, whether Unionist or Nationalist or Tory or Liberal, would condemn the whole thing as a disgraceful job. He (Mr. Dillon) called on the Government to ask such a Member as the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson), for instance, to stand up in his place and state his approval of the appointment which they were making. He thought the hon. and gallant Member was bound, as representing a certain section of the people of Ireland, to commit himself to this scheme if he approved of it—he was bound to get up and let the people of Ireland know how he stood in this regard. Having said so much as to the views of the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland, he (Mr. Dillon) now wished to say a word or two on the Resolution. The Resolution was such that it was impossible for them, from the strange way in which the business had been conducted, to divorce the consideration of this measure from the consideration of the antecedents and character of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman who was to fill the post which was to be made. It was the usual custom, he understood, in transactions of this character, to bring in the measure before the person was nominated to fill the Office. The step taken in the present case had been most unusual, for the Government had first got the Gentleman appointed to the Office, and then they brought in the Bill. They appointed the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet to a nominal—an unnecessary—Office without a salary; and, having made an appointment on that ground, they now, in another Session, introduced a Bill to enable them to give a salary to the person already occupying the position. That being so, the Government could not complain if the past career and the qualifications of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman who already occupied the Office were discussed by the House when their Bill was brought forward. It was objected, the last time this question was before the House, that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet was a strong partizan. He (Mr. Dillon) must say that it appeared to him that the Government and the House had seriously underrated the importance of the step Her Majesty's Advisers were now taking in appointing this right hon. and gallant Gentleman Parliamentary Under Secretary to answer Irish Questions in the House, and thus to assume a responsibility which ought to devolve on the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, because if there were a hope—though he did not believe there was a hope—of carrying on the Unionist system of Government in Ireland successfully, it was to sail the ship on an even keel. That was a phrase used in a late Administration. But could the Government themselves say, in the face of Ireland and England, that they were endeavouring to sail the ship on an even keel when they put on the Front Bench, as a responsible Minister to reply to Irish Members, a man who had been a most outspoken and uproarious champion of the Orange Party, and who had recently denounced the Nationalists on many platforms, using language the very strongest which had been used by the partizans of the Orange Party? He (Mr. Dillon) had seen it stated recently that within the last 18 months the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had subscribed to some of the associations which were now struggling for the mastery in Ireland. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman would have an opportunity of denying that, if he could deny it. He had been appointed by the Orange Party as their champion and banner bearer at the time the Executive was obliged to interfere and put down meetings and agitations in which the right hon. and gallant Gentleman was one of the most prominent participants. This was the sort of man they were going to tell the people of England the Irish people were going to get equal justice from. Let him (Mr. Dillon) tell the Committee that people in England were getting too well instructed in Irish matters to swallow any such monstrous thing as that. He warned the Government that in taking the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet on board the Unionist ship they were taking in a cargo which would sink the craft before it had gone far on its journey. The Irish Members had struggled against this appointment, and would continue to do so so long as they possibly could, though, truth to tell, from the point of view of the danger to the Unionist Party, he was rejoiced at the Government having fallen into so great a blunder as to make the appointment. He should like the Government to consult the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell), and those who took that hon. Member's view of the matter, and see what they thought, from the Unionist point of view, of this appointment. He (Mr. Dillon) had pointed out that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet was a partizan. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman was a strong political partizan, as had been already shown—he was a man who, from the very nature of his position, was compelled to be a violent partizan on the questions which socially must tear asunder Irish society. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman was at this moment at war with his own tenants in Ireland, and it was only two or three months ago since a deputation of his tenants waited on one of his (Mr. Dillon's) friends in Ireland asking him to enable them to adopt the Plan of Campaign against the right hon. and gallant Gentleman. Was that the man who was to be put at the head of the Irish Local Government Board, and who was to administer justice evenly between contending parties in that country? Was an Irish landlord, and an Irish landlord who was a violent partizan, an Irish landlord whose rents had been reduced 20 per cent within the past six months, a man who was at war with his own tenants, a man who was threatened with the adoption of a combination on his estate—a combination which, whatever might be said about its legality or illegality, many Englishmen would thoroughly approve of if they went over to Ireland and examined into the circumstances of the case—was this the man to be appointed to such a post? These facts, he (Mr. Dillon) contended, were facts which ought—in the minds of any sensible Unionists who wished to carry on the government of Ireland decently and sensibly—to render the appointment of such a man as the right hon. and gallant Gentleman absolutely impossible. It was a monstrous thing to ask the taxpayers to pay £1,000 a-year in order that they might get an Orangeman to control an important part of the government of Ireland, and give unsatisfactory and misleading and monstrous answers to Questions put by the Irish Members in the House, thereby enormously increasing the difficulty of government in Ireland. He believed firmly that the curse of their government in Ireland all throughout this century had been the fact that they had allowed themselves—perhaps it was impossible to avoid it under the circumstances—to be dictated to by the very class whom the right hon. and gallant Gentleman represented. That had been the cause unvaryingly from the beginning. He could not look into the mind of the right hon. Gentleman the present Chief Secretary for Ireland, and so far as he could judge he did not think very highly of the right hon. Gentleman's goodwill; but whether he was possessed with goodwill towards Ireland or not, it was the faction who were represented by the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet who would ruin his Government even if they had gone to Ireland with good intentions. They had seen Minister after Minister who had been obliged to contend against the efforts of that faction—the late Mr. Forster, for instance. He (Mr. Dillon) had never said—and he challenged anyone to find anywhere in his speeches anything to the contrary—that he did not believe that Mr. Forster had gone to Ireland with the best intentions. But what was the result of the right hon. Gentleman's administration? He was seized on by the faction which was represented by the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet—by the Castle and landlord faction—and in the course of a very short time even Mr. Forster, strong-willed man as he was, was made their tool. They blinded his eyes, and ultimately made him do their work. He (Mr. Dillon) did not know to what extent the right hon. Gentleman the present Irish Secretary was the willing tool or the unwilling tool of this faction; but he declared that the people of Ireland, and the more enlightened people of England, would hail this appointment as the outward sign of the process which had been the ruin of all the attempts of the British Government to rule Ireland in the past. They would take it as a sign that what Edmund Burke called the Junta in Dublin Castle had got firmly into the saddle. There sat—pointing to Front Ministerial Bench—the Representative of the Junta who had ruled since the time of Edmund Burke up to the present day. They were going to have the right and gallant Gentleman—the most unpopular man in Ireland—as their mouthpiece in that House in order to insult the Representatives of the Irish people. He only desired further to say that it was perfectly true that they would object altogether to the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet being mixed up with the government of Ireland on account of his Orangeism and partizanship; but they had another and a deeper objection, and if right hon. Gentlemen who were now Ministers of the Crown had any of that statesmanship which he could assure them it would take great deal to settle this question, they would at least, while denying to the people of Ireland the National rights they claimed, studiously avoid unnecessarily insulting their National sentiments and sympathies which were so deeply seated in the hearts of Irishmen. The Government of Ireland were not content with denying to the Irish people all National rights and liberties and that power to legislate which they might deem dangerous to the Empire, but they added gratuitous injury and insult, which rankled in the minds of the Irish people. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet had not only his recent record, but he had his previous record; and they knew very well that if there was was one thing more offensive than another to the Irish people it was a turncoat and a traitor. The Irish people could not forget that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had been one of the most vehement advocates of Home Rule or Repeal. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman had stated, even in writing to the papers, that he did not care whether it was Home Rule or Repeal. When he (Mr. Dillon) was a boy he remembered going to hear the right hon. and gallant Gentleman at certain great meetings in the Rotunda. He remembered hearing him and cheering him when he thundered out sentiments of Nationality that seemed rather in advance of his Leader, and at times he (Mr. Dillon) thought rather shocked his Leader. Writing to the Press on the 4th of June, 1870, the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had said—

> "Long before I addressed a word through your paper to the men of Ireland, long before I ventured to place myself, a young and nearly untried man, before the country as an advocate of Home Rule, I had considered not only the necessity but the possibility of obtaining for our Nation the only chance of prosperity—Irish Government in Irish affairs;"

and then the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had gone on to say that he agreed with a person whom he named—a person notorious for his extreme views—and went further than him in declaring that Associations of Nationalists, of advocates of Home Rule, of Repealers, call them what they would, but comprised in the phrase "lovers of our country," should join for this purpose. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman had stated that what was wanted was a fusion of Catholics and Protestants, and a purer patriotism than they had. He had said that they should not only associate to promote the great object they had in view, but that each and all of them should cast aside personal ambition, and be content to work for the common weal, he, for one, having already fought, and being prepared to fight again. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman wrote—

> "I think I have a claim upon the Nationalists of this country. If you can bring forward a better man he will have my support."

He also wrote—

> "Let none be for a Party, but all for the State;"

And later on, again—

> "Let everyone who is for a free Ireland unite, for an Ireland united is an Ireland free."

Elsewhere the words written by the right hon. and gallant Gentleman were written for the instruction of such as himself (Mr. Dillon). He had read them when he was growing up, and they had done their part in instructing him in the path of Irish Nationality, and they were words which, if he (Mr. Dillon) were to write them in the present day, the Associations to which the right hon. and gallant Gentleman subscribed would print them and placard them all over the country, in the endeavour to show that he was something more than a Home Ruler. He did not know that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman was as young when he wrote the words he had quoted as he (Mr. Dillon) was now, but certainly the right hon. and gallant Gentleman was not guarded in his expressions in those days. Was this the man the Irish people were now to have imposed upon them as a petty despot? The Orange Party in Ireland, who read the right hon. and gallant Gentleman's writings in days gone by, would now impose him as a petty despot upon people whom he had encouraged to go on in a course which, since he found that it entailed self-abnegation, left them to go under the operation of the Coercion Act by themselves. He (Mr. Dillon) maintained that such a course would make the operations of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman in Ireland, as the Representative of a Coercion Government, utterly and absolutely odious to the people of Ireland. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman would be called on to aid in administering in that House, and to justify the application of coercion to men whose only crime was that they followed the advice which he himself had given them—to men who had not turned tail, as had the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, but stood firm to their principles and utterances, and were prepared to take the consequences. He (Mr. Dillon) asked hon. Members whether it was to be expected that the people of Ireland would patiently submit to be ridden over by a turncoat Orangeman like this? He said they would not, and that by making this appointment the Government were merely pouring oil upon the fire, and that they could only expect it, as a consequence, to blaze higher and higher. He should oppose the Bill on every stage, and should point out its objectionable character to the people of England and the people of Ireland on every possible opportunity. At the same time, he made the Government a present of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman. He was pleased to think that they had made what he considered a fatal blunder.

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) said, it was not his intention to follow the hon. Gentleman into the major part of the statement he had just made, and it was only the desire of self-preservation, or to make a personal explanation, which induced him to rise at all. The hon. Member had spoken tolerably coolly, and with a certain amount of accuracy, up to the latter part of his speech; but when he came to his (Colonel King-Harman's) connection with the Hôme Rule movement, he made a statement and a charge which were more important than his previous statements—he had made a suggestion which he (Colonel King-Harman) was justified in making a very brief reply to. The hon. Member had said that he (Colonel King-Harman) had left the Home Rule Association when danger threatened its members. He threw that statement back in the hon. Gentleman's teeth with the scorn and contumely it deserved. The hon. Gentleman had said that he (Colonel King-Harman) had stuck to Home Rule when there were no Coercion Acts, but the hon. Member knew perfectly well when Coercion Acts were passed. The hon. Member said he had listened to his (Colonel King-Harman's) speeches when he professed to be an adherent to the policy of Home Rule. The hon. Member knew perfectly well that he was one of the few who had laid down money, and had sacrificed political and personal friendship in the hot days of his youth, on the altar of Home Rule, because he then believed that there was honesty among those men who were agitating for Home Rule, and that it was only when he found that there was no honesty among them that he found himself obliged to reconsider the ideas of his hot youth. It was no craven fear had made him leave the ranks of the Home Rule Party. He could honestly say that he had never gained a penny out of his adherence to Home Rule, and he had certainly never been paid a sixpence for sitting on the Benches below the Gangway opposite. The hon. Member and every man in Ireland, every honest Nationalist—aye, and every Fenian in Ireland, for there was more honourable feeling among Fenians than among those who sat below the Gangway opposite—knew what his sacrifices in the cause of Home Rule had been when he was a hot-headed young man, and that it was only when he found that it was best for his country to give up that cause that he ceased to be a Home Ruler. He had been tempted into speaking, perhaps, rather hotly in reference to this matter; but he confessed that, whatever other accusations might have been made against him, he had certainly not expected to be taunted with cowardice. He was satisfied that none of the hon. Members who sat on the Government side of the House, and that none of his countrymen in Ireland, would endorse the accusations which had been brought against him in the speech of the hon. Member.

MR. O'KELLY (Roscommon, N.) said, he had been very glad to hear from the right hon. and gallant Gentleman (Colonel King-Harman) his confession that he had been something more than a Home Ruler. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman had taken them into his confidence, and had made admissions as to facts which, without his confession, hon. Members might have had some difficulty in laying before this Assembly, for the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had accused himself of that which, if it had come from other quarters with any amount of force, might possibly have had the effect of causing him to occupy a different position than a seat on the Ministerial Bench. Personally, he (Mr. O'Kelly) had no objection to the right hon. and gallant Gentleman receiving this salary as a mere *employé* of the Government. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman was, unfortunately, one of his (Mr. O'Kelly's) constituents, which fact established a kind of freemasonry between them, and he certainly should not have opposed the right hon. and gallant Gentleman's receiving the salary. From his (Mr. O'Kelly's) personal point of view, he thought it very desirable that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman should receive a salary, for he was one of those Gentlemen whom they were obliged to support, and he would very much rather that the burden of supporting him should be transferred to the backs of the English ratepayers rather than that it should lie on the backs of the poor peasants of North Roscommon. But there was one aspect in which he did strongly object to the appointment of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, and to his position in connection with the Local Government Board of Ireland. As President of the Irish Local Government Board, the right hon. and gallant Gentleman would have to deal, amongst other bodies, with a body in Ireland known as the Boyle Town Commissioners. Now, what had been the relations of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman with that body? For some years the Town Commissioners had had a great deal of difficulty in getting the right hon. and gallant Gentleman to pay his rates, and the whole force of the Government of Ireland had been brought into operation to protect the right hon. and gallant Gentleman from the necessity of paying his rates to the Town Council of Boyle.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: I may, perhaps, be allowed here to make a personal explanation. I have never refused to pay the Town Commissioners' rates, but there is a body in Boyle who call themselves Town Commissioners whom we do not recognize.

MR. O'KELLY: The matter lies in this way——

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: The matter is *sub judice.*

MR. O'KELLY said, the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had found it to his interest to gain over or subsidize a gentleman who was Town Clerk, and who defied the Town Commissioners of Boyle in a way which would never be permitted in any civilized society, and the whole authority of the British Government had been used to support this man in his shameful defiance of the Town Commissioners. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman had supported that gentleman, who had claims upon him which went beyond those of Home Rule. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman knew what he (Mr. O'Kelly) was talking about.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Question before the Committee is that it is expedient to make provision with reference to the Office of Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland. Strictly speaking, the Question ought to be confined to the question of the expediency of making this provision, and ought not to be at all of a personal character. Considering, however, that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman has *de facto* filled the Office hitherto, and may be considered as designated to fill it in the future, I have not thought it beyond the limits of Parliamentary discussion to allow discussion of the political antecedents of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman. But I think it would be altogether an abuse of that liberty to allow it to go beyond what is described as the political antecedents of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman.

MR. O'KELLY said, that he had not gone beyond the right hon. and gallant Gentleman's political antecedents, and he thought that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman would admit that he had not even gone as far into his political antecedents as he could have done, because he knew a great deal more about them than did the Chairman or the House. But that was not the point upon which he had been going to speak. He had passed from that point, and was simply about to deal with the right hon. and gallant Gentleman's future position in relation to the Local Government Board of Ireland. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman's new position would bring him unquestionably into connection with, and give him considerable power over, the Boyle Town Commissioners, and he (Mr. O'Kelly) wished to explain to the House how it was that the exercise of that power might work evil to a few persons to whom the right hon. and gallant Gentleman was in political opposition. The Town Commission of Boyle was under the Local Government Board, and in his new position as President of the Local Government Board the right hon. and gallant Gentleman would have certain power and influence over that Town Commission. Now, he (Mr. O'Kelly) wanted——

THE CHAIRMAN: I entirely appreciate the line of argument which the hon. Member is pursuing, but I must rule it as quite out of Order.

MR. O'KELLY said, he was sorry that that should be so, but it had struck him that he might be in Order in pointing out what use the right hon. and gallant Gentleman might make of the position for which the House was called upon to vote him a salary. But independent of that question, which, as the Chairman had ruled out of Order, he would not pursue, they had the fact that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had been connected in Irish politics not merely with the Home Rule Party, but with Gentlemen who held still stronger views than the Home Rulers. Consequently, the effect of the appointment of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman would be to create in the minds of the Irish people a feeling and a conviction that the House was indifferent to the principles of the men they happened to employ, and that they were only anxious to buy men to serve them in Ireland. Now he thought that that would be a most unhappy impression to make on the minds of the people of Ireland. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman had very well said that he had never been paid for any political service he had rendered. Well, the right hon. and gallant Gentleman posed as a rich man, and he (Mr. O'Kelly) saw no inconvenience in the right hon. and gallant Gentleman in that capacity as a rich man continuing in his voluntary service, as he now discharged it, without coming on the country for any payment. He (Mr. O'Kelly) was sure that the nobility of his views would be sufficient payment for the right hon. and gallant Gentleman in the future as it had been in the past. They—the Irish Nationalists—of course, could not free their minds from the reflection that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had been one of them.

Colonel KING-HARMAN: No, no!

Mr. O'KELLY: Well, the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had not been as respectable as most of them, but, at any rate, he was a man who had occupied a place in their ranks. He had occupied a place in their ranks in a way that a spy very often occupied a place in the ranks of an Army to which he did not belong. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman had come to them pretending that he was a Nationalist, speaking the speech of Nationalism, giving voice to the sentiments of Nationality, and at the very first moment that he got an opportunity he betrayed them. Now they saw why he had betrayed them. He had been betraying them for pay. This Gentleman, who talked——

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is indulging in language which is wholly unbecoming in the House.

Mr. O'KELLY said, he was very sorry that he had felt called upon to use strong language. He was very sorry the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had betrayed the Nationalist Party, and would much rather that he had remained in the ranks to which he had allied himself. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman might still have continued to represent the county of Sligo. But there was this point to which he (Mr. O'Kelly) wished to call the attention of the English people. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman posed here as the Representative of the Unionist element in Ireland. Well, there was a certain Unionist element in Ireland which he (Mr. O'Kelly) respected—the men who honestly believed that the Union between the two countries was best preserved by that country remaining in a position of servitude and degradation. That was a stupid belief, perhaps, but still he held there were a certain number of people in Ireland stupid enough to believe that. But the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had not that excuse. He had had enlightenment; he had found salvation; he had had experience. Notwithstanding that, he had made this double turn, and had got back to the position in which the unconverted Orangeman stood. Now, one could respect the Orangeman—the man who from sheer belief was in the position in which the right hon. and gallant Gentleman stood—but he (Mr. O'Kelly) thought no one on either side of the House could have any respect for a man who, having been reared in the Orange faith, had announced himself as converted from that faith and had joined the Nationalist ranks, and had even fought in them, and had then gone back to Orangeism. He said the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had fought in the Nationalist ranks; and, as a matter of fact, the right hon. and gallant Gentleman was a great cudgel man. He had broken a great number of heads in the cause of Home Rule. He thought the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had been in the Longford Election with himself.

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I was not in the Longford Election.

Several hon. Members: He was; he was.

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I was not in that election.

MR. O'KELLY: I will not make that charge.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Yes; he was. [*Cries of* "Order!"]

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. and learned Member for North Longford must know that he is not entitled to use that language, and I must call upon him to withdraw it.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Shall I be in Order in asking the right hon. and gallant Gentleman whether he voted for John Martin? It was open voting.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN rose to answer the question——

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! No such question can be put. I have asked the hon. and learned Gentleman to withdraw the language he has used.

MR. T. M. HEALY: If the right hon. and gallant Gentleman says he did not vote for John Martin, I will withdraw the language I used.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. Member for North Roscommon (Mr. O'Kelly) made a statement which the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet denied. The hon. and learned Member for North Longford has questioned the truth of that denial, and I ask him to withdraw the words he used.

MR. T. M. HEALY: If the right hon. and gallant Gentleman says he did not vote——

THE CHAIRMAN: That is quite unpermissible. I again call upon the hon. and learned Gentleman unequivocally to withdraw the language he used.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Certainly, Sir.

MR. O'KELLY said, there had been a good deal of election fighting, and it was only to be expected that one would get confused as to who took part in it. He believed that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman did take part in the Longford Election in this sense—that he had subscribed to the funds.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: No, no!

MR. O'KELLY said, the right hon. and gallant Gentleman denied it, and, of course, he would not persist in the statement, as he had no wish to accuse anyone wrongfully. There were a sufficient number of strong facts against the right hon. and gallant Gentleman without his desiring to place anything upon him which was unfair. He did say, however, that it was a very unfortunate thing for the Government of Ireland that a Gentleman who had occupied the position in Irish politics which the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had occupied, and whom the Irish people had regarded as a political renegade—and in using that word he did not wish to give offence to the right hon. and gallant Gentleman—should be put into a position of power in Ireland. Renegades in all countries and at all times had been regarded as detestable creatures, and as persons not entitled to the honours of war. He was sorry to be obliged to say this of one of his own constituents, but truth compelled him to do so. From the point of view of the Irish people, the right hon. and gallant Gentleman was certainly a renegade, and in that character they objected to his being put into power in their country. Personally, he (Mr. O'Kelly) did not object to the bitterest Tory on the other side of the House being put into the right hon. and gallant Gentleman's position. He would rather see the hon. Member for Ballykilbeg, or the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson), put into the position. Of the two, he would prefer the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh. That hon. and gallant Member was a fighting man, and one might disagree with a fighting man, but, after all, one could arrange with him better; but he certainly objected, and objected strongly, and he thought all Ireland would object strongly, to the continuance in power of a right hon. and gallant Gentleman who had distinguished himself on many occasions as a most prominent and bellicose Home Ruler, and to his being put in Ireland to administer a Coercion Act. Such a thing was a disgrace to this country.

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) said, he did not desire to detain the Committee at any length on this point, but the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) had challenged the opinion of Irish Members sitting on that (the Ministerial) side of the House—in regard to the appointment of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet. He (Mr. Macartney) regretted that the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson) was not in his place to take up the challenge; but he (Mr.

Macartney) knew that on this occasion he spoke the opinion of the hon. and gallant Gentleman, and not only his opinion, but that of all his hon. Friends from Ireland. They supported and approved the appointment of the right hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet. They had no reason to believe that that appointment was uncongenial to their supporters, and they had had ample opportunities of ascertaining it if it had been so. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman was not now assuming the duties of his Office for the first time. As a matter of fact, he was appointed last year, and during the time he had been discharging his present Office they had, all of them, had opportunities of acquainting themselves with the opinions of their supporters; and he believed, as he said, that every one of his hon. Friends would say that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman's appointment was one they agreed with. He admitted the argument of the hon. Member opposite that the Unionist Party were largely interested and very greatly concerned in the good government of Ireland; but, from that point of view, they saw no reason to object to the appointment of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman. Having regard to the special duties the right hon. and gallant Gentleman would have to perform in connection with the Local Government Board of Ireland, they believed that the interests of the country would be efficiently served by the appointment. He (Mr. Macartney) only intervened in order to correct the false impression which might arise from the silence of himself and other hon. Gentlemen in the face of the accusation and complaint which had proceeded from the hon. Gentleman opposite.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) said, he was glad they had had the speech to which they had all just listened, as they knew now that the Orange Party was satisfied with the taste, tone, and manner of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman. He wondered that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland had not risen to answer the complaint which had been addressed to him from that (the Opposition) side of the House —that this Bill was a distinct violation of a solemn pledge made in the House by the right hon. Gentleman. On the 14th of April last the hon. Gentleman the Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) put a Question with reference to the then recently created Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland, and after him the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr. John Morley) intervened with another Question. The hon. Member for West Belfast said—

> "I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether Notice of Motion No. 1, standing to-day in the name of the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet (Colonel King-Harman) has been given by the hon. and gallant Gentleman as a Member of the Government; and, if so, under what law the Office he holds is constituted; and whether the acceptance of that Office vacates his seat?"
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> "The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster) was about to rise——
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> "When the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne said: May I interrupt the right hon. Gentleman? I was going to ask him by what authority the Office of Parliamentary Secretary for Ireland is constituted; and whether he will lay on the Table of the House any document describing the nature of the duties of the new Office, and the conditions under which it is to be held; whether it is proposed to attach any salary to the Office; and, if not, whether it is contended by Her Majesty's Government that there is a power without limit of constituting unpaid Parliamentary Offices?":

The Chief Secretary for Ireland said, in reply—

> "I cannot give a full answer to the Question which involves some legal points; but I may say that there is no salary attached to the Office. The Government have taken every pains to see that the course they have adopted is legal, and they have taken the highest legal advice on the subject."—(3 *Hansard* [313] 887-8.)

That was to say, he had taken legal advice as to whether the appointment, if unpaid, would be a legal one, and they found that it would be legal if unpaid.

The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): Hear, hear!

Mr. CLANCY: The right hon. Gentleman seemed to admit that. He had given that solemn pledge in the face of the country, and had appointed the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet Under Secretary on the distinct understanding that he should not be paid. But the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), with his accustomed acuteness, suspected the existence of a *suppressio veri* in the glib utterance of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, and he put this question—

"Is the seat to be vacated?"

"Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir.

"Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: Will there be some statement laid before the House to show the grounds on which the seat is not to be vacated?

"Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I believe the grounds are that it is not an Office of profit under the Crown.

"Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I can only say this—that I once had the honour of serving a Conservative Government as Commissioner for the Ionian Islands for a very few days; and under the advice of the Law Officers of the Government, though I received no salary, yet my seat for the University of Oxford was vacated, and I was re-elected. That was in 1859.

"Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I would suggest that the best course would be to put a Question to the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for England." — (3 *Hansard*, [313] 1887-8.)

How the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary can have the face to come here after these declarations of last spring, and ask the House of Commons to pay the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Parliamentary Under Secretary a salary, when such a short time ago they would not have dared to appoint him at a salary, and as to whom they had obtained legal advice that such an appointment would be illegal, he (Mr. Clancy) was at a loss to imagine. On the day following that on which the Questions he had referred to had been put, another Question was put to the First Lord of the Treasury. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne asked—

"By what authority the Office of Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland has been constituted; whether any document will be laid before Parliament describing the nature and duties of the Office, and the conditions under which it is held; and whether it is contended that the Government has the power to create unpaid Parliamentary Offices without limit?"

And now he (Mr. Clancy) begged the attention of the House to the answer. The first Lord of the Treasury said—

"Mr. Speaker, the Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant has been appointed by virtue of the authority which exists in the Executive Government of the day to appoint Assistant Secretaries in order to carry out in an efficient manner the duties cast upon any Department of the State, subject, in certain cases, to statutory control, respecting the vacating of seats, the right to sit in Parliament, and the payment of salaries, if any. No document will be laid before Parliament describing the nature and duties of the Office, or the conditions under which it is held; but it is right to state distinctly that no salary or profit is attached to the Office. The last Question being one of abstract law, the right hon. Gentleman is perfectly able to form his own conclusion upon it.

"Mr. JOHN MORLEY: Well, Sir; but is the House, then, to have no means of knowing what are the functions, duties, and conditions of the appointment?

"Mr. W. H. SMITH: The right hon. Gentleman is well acquainted with the duties of Public Offices which have to be discharged by the Executive Government. He is also aware what are the duties which ordinarily fall to Under Secretaries in a Public Office."—(*Ibid.* 1002-3.)

It seemed to him (Mr. Clancy), therefore, that the statement made last year amounted to a distinct pledge, as distinct as any pledge could be, that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet was to hold his Office without salary, and on that ground he would not be asked to vacate his seat; but now, in the face of that pledge, the Government came to the House of Commons and asked them to vote a salary to the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, and did not give the slightest information as to whether the right hon. and gallant Gentleman would be called upon to vacate his seat if he were paid a salary. He (Mr. Clancy) did not pretend to be a Constitutional lawyer; but it seemed to him that the Gentleman who signed the cheque for the first quarter's salary for the Parliamentary Under Secretary would stand in danger of having an action brought against him, and probably might be obliged to pay back the money to the Treasury. He certainly hoped he would.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said, the matter had been very fully discussed the last time it was brought before the House.

MR. CLANCY: Sir, it is very inconvenient for me to be interrupted before I have finished my speech.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. Member distinctly sat down.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I thought the hon. Member had come to the conclusion of his remarks, and that he had delivered the peroration of his eloquent speech. If he has anything further to say he will be able to continue after I have made a few remarks with the view of clearing up the mistake into which the hon. Gentleman and many of his Friends appear to have fallen. He has quoted certain questions and answers which had been given in the House last Session with regard to the Office of Parliamentary Under Secretary. The questions related to the Office as it was then constituted; and what hon. Gentlemen wished to know was whether the Government had legal powers to appoint an Under Secretary, and whether, if they had such power, the Under Secretary had or had not to vacate his seat? The Government replied, speaking with such advice as they could command, that they had power to appoint an Under Secretary, and that as he would not be paid he would not vacate his seat. Had they provided out of the Votes a salary, without providing that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman should vacate his seat, they would have violated the law. But hon. Gentlemen opposite had, no doubt unintentionally, twisted the answer given as to the Parliamentary Under Secretary into a pledge that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet should give his unpaid services to the country indefinitely. That was a thing which the Government never conceived. They had never concealed from the House that their desire was, as soon as the state of Public Business would permit it, to bring in a Bill which would put his right hon. and gallant Friend into the position of every other Under Secretary. [An hon. MEMBER: You never said so.] Was there a single Member of the House who seriously supposed that the Government would ask any Gentleman to go on indefinitely fulfilling the duties of Under Secretary for Ireland, where the labour was far heavier than that of any other Under Secretary in the House, without giving him the salary which other Under Secretaries received? If hon. Members would look at what I said last Session, they would see that the answers I had given were simply with reference to the action the Government were then taking as to the Under Secretary. They showed that the action of the Government was perfectly legal.

MR. CLANCY said, the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) had made a statement which he thought the House must have listened to with the utmost possible astonishment—namely, that the Government had intended to bring in a Bill to pay this salary. Not a single word had ever been said in that House or out of it to that effect, and the person to be benefited by it himself understood that he was not to be paid so recently as two months ago. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman addressed the electors at Margate and said he was then working 18 hours a day for nothing; that he was not paid like the Irish Members; that he gave his services to the public for nothing, and when, according to the Chief Secretary for Ireland, he must have known that there was a Bill in preparation to pay him a salary. He (Mr. Clancy) supposed that the next thing would be the introduction of the Bill to pay the salary from April last. [Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Bill is not retrospective.] He thought he was correct in saying that, after all that had fallen from the First Lord of the Treasury.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I never said anything of the kind. Will the hon. Gentleman say when I said that?

MR. CLANCY said, that the right hon. Gentleman had made so many speeches, short and long, and that he, not having a secretary to write them down, could not recollect the particular speech. He pointed to the significance of this appointment. It was said as an argument against Irish Members that under Home Rule they would commit the atrocity of handing over the minority to the will of the majority. He did not think that was very unusual in any country; but here they had the majority handed over to the rule of the minority. But he thought that was a fact on which they might reflect with some advantage in considering who were the rulers in Ireland at present—namely, that not one man in the Government of Ireland could be said to represent what could be fairly called the overwhelming majority of the people. Every single office in Ireland was filled up by men who would not be elected in any one of 86 constituencies in Ireland. The Parliamentary Under Secretary was an Orangeman. The Local Government Board was a nest of Orangemen, and the Board of Works was the same. They had listened to some of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman's political antecedents, and the Chairman had ruled that these might be referred to. He asked the House to listen to some extracts from a speech of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman on the subject of Home Rule against which the Unionist Party would cry out *anathema maranatha.* In August, 1870, the right hon. and gallant Gentleman said—

> "That a man who would fight for the Opposition candidate on that election would fight and shout for the perpetuation of the Union which was forced by fraud upon the country; that he came forward neither as a Whig or Tory, and was of no political opinion whatever, but simply an Irishman; Ireland alone was his motto—the shamrock, the green immortal shamrock; with the green and the orange united they would win their glorious freedom; he believed that if a Parliament was established on College Green in which Irishmen could manage their own affairs, Ireland would become rich and prosperous."

The right hon. and gallant Gentleman had contradicted the hon. Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy) when he said that he took part at the Longford election, but in the course of the speech the right hon. and gallant Gentleman said that he had fought the battle at Longford.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: The hon. Member knows perfectly well what I alluded to.

MR. CLANCY said, he was quoting from a speech of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman himself, and he did not know to what else the right hon. and gallant Gentleman alluded. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman said—

> "It did not matter a scrap to him personally whether he was returned or not, but if they returned a Nationalist to Parliament, the whole of Ireland would respond; that when Ireland claimed her just rights and claimed to manage their own affairs, he asked would England dare to refuse them; when the day came for them to vote, let them not vote for him, but for Ireland; let the green be over their head, and their cry be, God Save Ireland."

Irish Members had been charged with preaching separation in the past, and when such expressions as these were quoted from the speeches of Irish Members they were set down as advocating rebellion in Ireland; but here was the right hon. and gallant Gentleman using the very language for which they would be condemned. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman, on the 13th of August, 1870, declared that he could not understand any man, knowing anything of his country, and knowing anything of the career of O'Connell and Grattan, doubting that Home Rule or some substitute for it was the only panacea for the evils of Ireland. Someone at the time said that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman's promises were very fine, but insincere; and then he asked plainly what he had to gain by insincerity? He asked, if he were elected to-morrow, whether any Government, Conservative or Liberal, would give him any honour or place when he came to them as the avowed opponent of English rule; that whatever his connections were they been against the Union, and that his relatives had moved an Amendment to that infamous Act; that the Conservatives said he was abandoning his principles, and that he told them it was they who were abandoning their principles, and not he, for in former days the Conservatives were for the people, and now they were against them. And here he (Mr. Clancy) came to the point of his speech which had a most particular interest with reference to the matter they were discussing. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman on that occasion concluded his speech by saying that he would never, never take Office or pension from any Government. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman had said that these things were uttered in the days of his hot youth. But he was then over 30 years of age; and he (Mr. Clancy) said that at that time of life men formed very deliberate opinions. The Irish people had made a mistake in thinking that he was sincere in making those statements, and they distrusted him now because he was a renegade, and because he was the champion of the Orange Party and gave that Constitutional advice to them to keep their hands on their triggers, who incited them, in other words, to civil war. Did the Committee think that this man, who was an inciter to violence and crime, and was engaged in the combination of landlords and Orangemen, was fitted for the Office to which he had been appointed? It was an insult which the Irish people would not forget—that he had been set over the rest of the Irish people to govern them.

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.) said, he should like to make a few remarks with regard to this subject. Those who came from his part of the country had complete confidence in the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland. They were all perfectly aware of the Home Rule antecedents of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, which had been made so much of in that House; and not only that, but they were aware of the circumstances which had led up to those views. At the time those opinions were expressed, they were smarting under what was considered to be the injustice of the Disestablishment of the Irish Church; and some of them took counsel together as to whether or not, after the breach of one of its most important provisions, the Union was to their advantage; for 10 minutes he had himself entered into that conspiricy. His conversion had come rather quicker than that of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, who was a younger man than himself by 10 years. On the occasion he referred to, he (Colonel Waring) said—"Gentlemen, nothing will induce me to row in this boat;" and he then left. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland had taken a longer time to discover his position, but in the end arrived at the same conclusion. The people of the North of Ireland believed that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman was performing his duty without favour or affection, and was doing good service to his Queen and country.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) said, that the other day the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury had stated, in reply to a Question he (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) himself had addressed to him, that there was a rule against any Member of the English Civil Service belonging to an Orange Lodge or Society. The right hon. Gentleman had also, on another occasion, stated that the same rule applied to all Departments of the Civil Service. He desired to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, whether the fact that the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland was a notorious Orangeman, was or was not reconcilable with the view of the rule or understanding which prevailed in the Civil Service, and whether it would be necessary to modify the rule if the right hon. and gallant Gentleman remained in his present position?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I can hardly think the hon. Gentleman is speaking seriously; these rules are held to apply to gentlemen who are not engaged in political controversy. Those Gentlemen who hold seats in this House are an exception, because they are unfortunately compelled to take part in political controversy.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR asked if he was to understand that there was no objection to a member of an Orange Lodge being the head of the Local Government Board in Ireland, while every other officer and member of the Inland Revenue as well, was prohibited by the rule enforced from belonging to that Society?

[No reply.]

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) said, he thought the point raised by his hon. Friend was one which needed a rather more serious answer than the right hon. Gentleman opposite had given it. They must remember that to belong to an Orange Lodge was to belong to a political organization compared with which none that they had in England possessed any weight or force. The Primrose League was mere pantomine as compared with an Orange Lodge, and it was a remarkable thing that the Government should have appointed to the Local Government Board in Ireland a Gentleman who was associated with that society. Therefore, he thought the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith) would have taken a much more serious view of the point. The hon. and gallant Gentleman below the Gangway opposite (Colonel Waring) had shed a very curious light upon the breadth and depth of the Unionist sentiments of himself and Friends, when he said that they had turned towards Home Rule because they thought that the Disestablishment of the Irish Protestant Church was bad for them.

Colonel WARING: I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon; I said nothing of the kind. I said that in the indignation occasioned at the time by what we deemed an insult to our Church, we had for a moment considered whether Home Rule might not be for our advantage.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY said, he did not understand the hon. and gallant Gentleman to deny that in consequence of the Disestablishment of the Irish Church they had considered whether the Union would be good or bad for them.

Colonel WARING: I said it was suggested that such was the case, and that after 10 minutes' consideration I came to the opposite conclusion.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY said, the hon. and gallant Gentleman could not deny that he and his Friends were prepared to throw over the Act of Union, just as the right hon. and gallant Gentleman himself (Colonel King-Harman) had been prepared to do.

THE CHAIRMAN: I ask the right hon. Gentleman to address his remarks to the subject before the Committee.

MR. JOHN MORLEY said, he thought that as the hon. and gallant Gentleman (Colonel Waring) had been allowed to address himself to that subject, he was not out of Order in referring to it. Well, they had now at last from the Government a plain announcement, made for the first time, that the Bill was not to be retrospective. He could not help asking himself how far this decision on the part of the Government not to make the Bill retrospective was due to the action which Members on that side of the House had taken. The point he rose to press sprang from the answer of the Chief Secretary for Ireland as to the announcement which he and the First Lord of the Treasury made last year on the subject of salary. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland appeared to him to have put a most extraordinary construction upon what passed last year, and he (Mr. Morley) submitted that in his replies to his Questions on the 14th and 15th of April, he made a statement which was universally understood in that House to mean that this was to be an unpaid Office. The right hon. Gentleman said that when he (Mr. Morley) put his Question, he raised a legal point. No doubt, he did raise a legal point; but the right hon. Gentleman put aside and dismissed that legal point without an answer, and then he went on to say—"I may say that there is no salary attached to the Office." That answer distinctly dissevered the question of salary from that legal point the right hon. Gentleman now asserted was raised by the Question. He had every desire to speak respectfully of the right hon. Gentleman; but he must think that the answers he and his right hon. Colleague who now sat next him gave last year, in the light of what the right hon. Gentleman said a quarter of an hour ago, was nothing more or less than trifling with the House. [*Laughter.*] The right hon. Gentleman might smile —"and smile"—[*Laughter*]—but he had placed the question now in a position from which it would become him to lose no time in extricating it and extricating himself.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR protested against the tone the right hon. Gentleman had adopted. He had never heard a speech delivered with more "sound and fury," and which signified less. The right hon. Gentleman, first of all, fastened upon one most extraordinary misunderstanding, and having done that and been called to Order by the Chairman, the right hon. Gentleman proceeded to insinuate that the Government had intended to make the Bill retrospective, but, alarmed by the eloquence of the right hon. Gentleman and his Friends, the Government retired in terror from the position they had taken up. But, unfortunately for that theory, the Bill existed in its present shape long before those outbursts of eloquence to which the right hon. Gentleman had referred. It had never occurred to the Government, and, in fact, he had only discovered that night that any right hon. Gentleman entertained the idea that the Bill was to be retrospective. He should have thought they would never have entertained such a fantastic notion, for he should have thought they would have made themselves acquainted with the laws of England, and would have known that to make the Bill retrospective would be practically committing a fraud on the Statute. But as the Government never intended to do that, it never entered into his head in the wildest moment to attempt to give his right hon. and gallant Friend (Colonel King-Harman) a retrospective salary. They knew perfectly well that his right hon. and gallant Friend, not receiving a salary, was not under the necessity of vacating his seat; but his right hon. and gallant Friend having occupied his seat all last year, for the Government to come to Parliament this year, and by a Bill give his right hon. and gallant Friend the salary for the year passed, thus enabling him to occupy a place of profit, and not to resign his seat, would be nothing less than a fraud upon the Statute. But such was the standard of morality that obtained among right hon. Gentlemen opposite that nothing seemed more natural than a manœuvre of that kind. The Government, however, had a somewhat different standard of morality to that which appeared naturally to suggest itself to the right hon. Gentleman, and never entertained such an idea. He did not think it was necessary for him to go over the ground he had more than once traversed in regard to the Question and answer in reference to the salary of his right hon. and gallant Friend. They answered the Question with regard to the legal point, and never made any concealment; he could say that with confidence, and if right hon. Gentlemen would only consult their memories, they would find that the Government never entertained the extravagant, absurd, and ridiculous notion that they were going indefinitely to ask his right hon. and gallant Friend to come to the House, and bear the burden and heat of the day, that every man must bear who had a seat on that Bench, without receiving a single sixpence of salary. Such an idea never crossed his mind, and let hon. Members consult their recollections, and they would find they never credited the Government with entertaining any such notion. He was sorry the right hon. Gentleman had made accusations and insinuations such as appeared in his speech, and he felt sure that when cooler moments returned to him, the right hon. Gentleman would see they were not justified.

SIR CHARLES RUSSELL (Hackney, S.) said, in his judgment this matter was much more serious than might be supposed from what he might almost call the flippant manner of the Chief Secretary in answering his right hon. Friend (Mr. John Morley). The House now learned that when on three several occasions, the 14th April, 15th April, and 12th May, this subject came up for reference in the House, and on each of those occasions the Representative of the Government assured the House that the question of election did not arise because it was not a paid Office—hon. Members were now informed they must be fools to suppose that when it suited the convenience of the Government, it was not to cease to remain an unpaid Office. All he could say was that if the Government intended to make this a paid Office, they took the most extraordinary pains to conceal their intention from the House. He would like to ask when the Government changed their minds? [MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Never.] Never! Then at the very time that they were assuring the House that no election was necessary, because there was no salary attached to the Office to which the right hon. Gentleman was appointed, they had at that very time formed the intention of making it a paid Office! Then he would ask, appealing to that high standard of morality, of which, forsooth! the right hon. Gentleman claimed for his Party the exclusive possession, he asked why did the Government on those three several occasions, by the mouths of two responsible Ministers, if they had that intention, employ such language as—and this he would say clearly and distinctly—misled a large portion of the House? Then a word or two on the appointment itself. He objected to it in the first place, because there was no proved necessity for it; in the next place because of the manner in which it had been attempted to be foisted on the House; and he objected to it lastly (and he regretted to introduce the personal element for a moment), because of the person who was designated to fill the post. As to the manner in which it had been brought about, he had indicated to the House his objection and as to the present necessity, he would say a word or two. When this matter was mentioned on April 14th, if hon. Members would refer to *Hansard*, they would see that a special reason was given why the services of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman (Colonel King-Harman) were called in aid of the Chief Secretary, the reason being a pressure of work—but a pressure stated to be of a temporary nature—then supposed to be put upon the Chief Secretary. It would be seen also—and he called especial attention to this in connection with the intention from the first which the right hon. Gentleman had now avowed—that the language then pointed not to a permanent position of Assistant Secretary to the Chief Secretary, but merely to a temporary or passing necessity to relieve the Chief Secretary in his then work. Then, again, he asked the Chief Secretary to reconsider the statement he made interrupting him (Sir Charles Russell) when he said the Government always had the intention of making this a paid Office, for the language used so far from discovering that intention referred to a passing necessity for which the right hon. and gallant Gentleman was for a certain undefined time to be called in aid. As to the necessity for the appointment, he (Sir Charles Russell) utterly denied that the present Chief Secretary was worked to a greater degree than his Predecessors. In many respects, he was much better off than his Predecessors. It was quite true that his right hon. Friend (Mr. John Morley) had not the odious work of piloting a Coercion Bill through the House. Because he had some sympathy with Irish feeling, and treated Irish Members with some respect and decency, he was able to get through the duties of his Department without creating great obstruction, yet he was in the singular position that he had not a single Law Officer from Ireland to assist him, and was obliged to answer all the Questions put in the House to whatever branch of the Irish administrative system those questions referred. The post of Assistant Secretary, he repeated, was not necessary, and he more especially thought the Chief Secretary should not be relieved from the duty of answering Questions in the House. He thought it would much better become the right hon. Gentleman if he were to come up to the opinion he (Sir Charles Russell) once formed of him, when he occupied a seat below the Gangway as a Member of the Fourth Party, and desired really to inform his mind conscientiously and thoroughly about his duty to the Irish people, to go into these questions and inform his mind, instead of treating questions put from below the Gangway as merely so many incidents of a necessarily unpleasant character, to be met by official answers by anyone giving as little information as possible, and as little respectfully as possible. The right hon. Gentleman knew very little about Ireland. His position, unhappily—and it was not altogether his own fault, it was the position of most Irish Secretaries—isolated him from contact with National sympathies and National opinion, with no means of gauging the feelings of the people, getting his information from a purely official class dependent upon that class and upon that only. It would do the right hon. Gentleman good, if he had the desire honestly to discharge his duty to the Irish people in the Office he held, if he were to occupy his time in the useful work, drudgery though it might seem, of getting up the circumstances under which the Coercion Act was being put in force in many instances, and trying to realize that, after all, matters which seemed to him trivial and unimportant—[*Cries of* "Question!"]—he was speaking straight to the question—which seemed trivial and unimportant, were matters which touched closely the daily life of the Irish people and the public peace of the country. It would help the right hon. Gentleman to realize what ought to be his primary duty, to inform himself by personal inquiry and observation of the way in which the Act—odious as he (Sir Charles Russell) believed it to be—was being administered. This new Office, then, was not one to which the House should lend its sanction. And then as to the right hon. and gallant Gentleman who was to fill the post. He hoped the House would believe him when he said he was exceedingly reluctant to make these personal references, and had they been avoidable he would gladly have avoided them. He sincerely regretted that he had to say even so much as he was about to say. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman said he had changed opinions formed and acted upon in his hot youth. Well, his youth, he must say, was not a very hot one, when in 1877 he walked up the floor of the House introduced by Mr. Isaac Butt. He must have been about 40 years of age at that time.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: I beg the hon. and learned Gentleman's pardon. I was not introduced by Mr. Butt, but by Lord Claud Hamilton and Mr. Walter Spencer Stanhope.

SIR CHARLES RUSSELL said, he accepted the correction; but his information was that on one occasion the right hon. and gallant Gentleman was introduced by Mr. Butt and the present Lord St. Oswald.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: Allow me to say that my statement is an absolute fact, and I stake my veracity against the information of the hon. and learned Gentleman.

SIR CHARLES RUSSELL said, he of course accepted that statement at once. But though the right hon. and gallant Gentleman might not have had the companionship of Mr. Butt in walking up the floor, he certainly had the support of Mr. Butt when seeking election to a seat in the House. [Colonel KING-HARMAN assented.] Of course that was the point of his argument.

[*Laughter.*] Of course it was the point of his argument, the question of who walked up the floor was comparatively trivial and unimportant. It could not be denied that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman seconded the Motion of Mr. Butt on the Home Rule Question. Well, he said he had changed the opinions of his hot youth, and he (Sir Charles Russell) would not dwell on that further. Accepting that, assuming that, did it make the right hon. and gallant Gentleman a less objectionable person for a high official Office in the eyes of the Irish people? It did not. Assuming that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had changed his opinions from thoroughly conscientious motives, accepting his statement, that was not the way in which he was regarded in Ireland. He was regarded there as a man who, having secured a seat in the House by the profession of political opinions in harmony with the aspirations of the Irish people, turned his back on those opinions, and he must not be astonished to find that he was looked upon in their eyes as a traitor to the National cause. More than that. He did not know how long the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had held a position, an important position in the Orange body, a body which had done more to keep asunder and divide the Irish people than any that had existed in the history of the country—not even excepting the landlord class—a society for which there may have been some pretence of reason years ago, but the existence of which in the Ireland of to-day was a standing insult to the Irish people, and a standing reflection on the government of Ireland.

Colonel KING-HARMAN: May I ask the hon. and learned Gentleman what position he alludes to as being held by me in the Orange body.

Sir CHARLES RUSSELL said, member of an Orange Lodge, probably Master of an Orange Lodge; he was not acquainted with the degrees in the Society. Then take the right hon. and gallant Gentleman in another relation. He was a landlord. In that position he honestly believed, like a great many landlords in Ireland, he was suffering not for his own sins nearly so much as for the sins of those who had gone before him. He honestly believed that to be true of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman; but still he was a representative of the landlord class, and had himself received rather rough treatment at the hands of the Irish Land Commission. Was this the man to be entrusted with, or to have a powerful voice in the nomination of, or selection of, men to administer the Land Act? It was impossible to think so. Further, the right hon. and gallant Gentleman took an influential part in other parts of the administrative system of government in Ireland to which the people so strongly objected, the nomination of magistrates, the Grand Jury system of which, no doubt, the right hon. and gallant Gentleman in his county was a prominent member. Looking at it from any point of view, no candid man could deny that if it were desired to select a man emphatically a *persona ingrata* to the Irish people, this would be the man to select. Of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman's personal qualities, he did not speak; he knew nothing of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, and speaking seriously, it was no pleasure to him to have to say what he had said. Finally, he had to say this. Not long since a speech was made by the right hon. Baronet (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), the most recent acquisition to the ranks of the Government, and Member for West Bristol. He had never himself attached the great importance to that speech that some of his Friends did. A great many thought it was a new revelation, a declaration of a new policy on the part of the right hon. Baronet, but he never so regarded it; but that speech struck one healthy key-note —a note that until the present holder of the Office of Chief Secretary struck, he would never have the satisfaction, or deserve to have the satisfaction, of feeling that he was properly fulfilling the duties of his Office. The right hon. Baronet said that at least an attempt ought to be made to make the laws and to administer the laws and affairs of Ireland in sympathy with the just wants and wishes of the Irish people. He did not take that at all as a confession that the right hon. Baronet was going in for Home Rule; nothing of the kind. But it did mean this— that so far as the Party could, they would, if they were wise, consistently with their opinions upon Home Rule, do everything they could to convey to the world, to satisfy their own consciences and those of their followers, govern Ireland regardful of the wishes, mindful even of the prejudices, of the people, though withholding that self-government they desired. If he had any compensation for the strong feeling he had against the present tenant of the Office of Chief Secretary, it was that, in his heart, he believed that his action in administration, and in this his latest example, was making it clear to thoughtful minds that this system and policy in relation to Ireland, disregarding the wishes of the people, could not be persevered in. The appointment of unpopular persons to the government of the country could not be persisted in, though a majority might allow it to be pursued for a time. In the end, you must fall back on that which was the only true, solid, and abiding principle of popular government, reliance on the wishes, wants, support, and moral sanction of the people governed.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 159; Noes 103: Majority 56.—(Div. List, No. 44.)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report these Resolutions to the House."

MR. T. M. HEALY said, at this stage of the proceedings, he thought those who objected to the Bill should enforce their opposition, as they should at every stage. That was his own intention, and whatever stage offered opportunity of opposition he should avail himself of. The Irish Chief Secretary made at one stage of these proceedings a remarkable statement, one of the most remarkable he had made in his remarkable career. He said that every statement that had been made against the right hon. and gallant Gentleman (Colonel King-Harman) had been denied. But he (Mr. T. M. Healy) should like to know what had really been denied? Meanwhile he would make a further statement in reference to the right hon. and gallant Gentleman in regard to a matter that had occurred since his connection with the Irish Local Government Board, and within the last ten days. He challenged a denial of this statement. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman was made President of the Local Government Board. Well, the Local Government Board was called upon to submit two names to the Fairs and Markets Commission, which had to report on the question with regard to taking tolls and payments for the sale of cattle in Ireland at fairs. This demand was made to the Local Government Board, since the Chief Secretary said that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman was made head of that department.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I never said that my right hon. and gallant Friend was appointed head of the Local Government Board. On the contrary, I said he was not, and that the Chief Secretary remained the President. The hon. and learned Member is raising this point in a particularly inconvenient way.

MR. T. M. HEALY said, these were inconvenient questions, and that was why they were raised. He could assure hon. Members that he deeply regretted that they were obliged to share this inconvenience. If the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had not been made the head of the Local Government Board, had he been made the tail of it, or what was he. [An hon. MEMBER: Vice President.] What was the statement made about him? He was connected with the Local Government Board in some way. Vice President was suggested, and he adopted that. The specific statement he had to make was in regard to his position at the Local Government Board, and could be traced to the right hon. and gallant Gentleman. The Fairs and Markets Commission asked for the names of two Commissioners to be sent over to Ireland, to inquire into the question of tolls at Fairs and Markets. This was a question that had been keenly agitating the public mind for some time and Lord Middleton had interested himself in the subject, and for seven years there had been contention on the point of the legality of fairs held by the people who wished to sell their cattle without putting money into the pockets of the landlords. A Royal Commission being appointed to inquire as to how far these tolls were legal or illegal, that Commission asked the Irish Local Government Board for the names of two Gentlemen, from which they would select one to go over to Ireland for purposes of inquiry. Who was the Gentleman recommended? One was a Mr. Kelly, from the West; but the other, the first of the two, was Colonel Caleb Robinson, J.P., the ex-agent of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman. When did this Gentleman cease to be agent? Irish Members were told they must be careful, before they charged corruption or impeached the action of the Government, but here they found that within a few days, after the Chief Secretary had stated that his Colleague and coadjutor was appointed to the Local Government Board, while he was scarcely warm in his Office, came the nomination of Colonel Caleb Robinson, J.P., D.L., and all the rest of it of the County of Roscommon. Why was he selected for a Sub-Commissioner? Because he was the ex-agent of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, and he would become his mouthpiece on the Royal Commission in Ireland. When the Chief Secretary made his general, not to say flippant, denial the other day, it would have been well if the charges denied had been specified. Was it denied that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman was an Orangeman? Here was a report of a speech of his made at Rathmines in 1884, in which, unlike others, such as the hon. Member for South Belfast (Mr. Johnston) who never made this a religious question, but said they were Orangemen for the defence of their country by force of arms, he imported religious animosity into his Orangeism. In his speech at Rathmines, as reported in *The Daily Express*, in reference to the removal of Lord Rossmore from the magistracy, the right hon. and gallant Gentleman said—

> "Their enemies were determined to spring a surprise on them, and at the present time it therefore behoved them to keep sentries on the watch, fires lighted, and cartridges in the rifles. It was not enough for the men of the North to stand together; the Orange Association, of which he was a Member, was a strong bond of union for men professing one faith in the country."

There was not only a political complexion given to Orangeism, but a religious complexion also. He had read Orange speeches and Orange songs, some of them very good ones; but by the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, for the first time, so far as he was aware, was religious faith imported into the higher branch of current politics by any noteworthy person. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman was put forward, probably, as a representative of the Irish landlords. But he was not a representative of tolerable Irish landlords, and his own words before a Committee of the House of Lords showed this. Replying to Question 7,522, on June 18th, 1882 (he was asked by the Chairman as to what were his relations with his tenants), he answered—"I do not think there is a man in Ireland on worse terms with his tenants." The right hon. and gallant Gentleman did not think there was a man in Ireland on worse terms! Not even excepting Lord Clanricarde, of pious memory! And yet this man was selected to be Under Secretary for Ireland! What statements had been denied? Was it denied that, avowing himself a Home Ruler, he was elected by the Home Rule Party? Was it denied that he pledged himself on the hustings at Sligo, before the parish priest, never to accept Office under the British Government? Was it denied that, on a particular occasion, he adopted the name of Wilkinson——

And it being Midnight, the Chairman rose to interrupt the Business:—

Whereupon Mr. WILLIAM HENRY SMITH rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put." [*Cries of* "Too late!"]

MR. PARNELL (Cork) rose to Order. He submitted the fact that the Chairman had risen, the clock pointing to 12 before the right hon. Gentleman rose to make his Motion. Was it not the Rule that Opposed Business could not be taken after 12?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is evidently not acquainted with the Rule. The Rule provides that the Speaker or the Chairman interrupting the Business, the closure may then be moved. That is to say, that immediately on the interruption of Business by Speaker or Chairman, the closure may be moved and put.

Question put accordingly, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 146; Noes 86: Majority 60.—(Div. List, No. 45.)

Question put, "That the Chairman do report these Resolutions to the House."

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 144; Noes 86: Majority 58.—(Div. List, No. 46.)

(1.) *Resolved,* That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of a Salary to the Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

(2.) *Resolved,* That it is expedient to make regulations for the office of Under Secretary and of Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow,* at Two of the clock.

BURGH POLICE AND HEALTH (SCOTLAND) BILL.—[BILL 118.]

(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland, Sir Herbert Maxwell.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.), asked the Lord Advocate whether, considering the Bill contained an enormous number of clauses, he would agree to refer it to a Select Committee. If he agreed to that, it might be anticipated there would be no difficulty in the Bill passing this stage.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities) said, he would be very glad to consider that suggestion. The Bill, however, had passed more than one Select Committee.

Second Reading *deferred* till *Thursday.*

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (IRELAND) BILL.—[BILL 131.]

(*Mr. Arthur Balfour, Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland, Colonel King-Harman.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked, would he be in Order in moving the adjournment?

MR. SPEAKER said, it would not be in Order to interpolate that Motion on the reading of the Orders of the Day.

Second Reading *deferred* till *Thursday.*

MR. T. M. HEALY said, he would now make the Motion for Adjournment, in order to remind the Government that an engagement had been given that no contentious Business would be taken at a Morning Sitting. He was not quite sure whether the next stage of the Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland Bill came within that category. It might save time to have a reply.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.) said, the Bill to which the hon. and learned Gentleman referred would not be taken at the Morning Sitting on the morrow.

MR. T. M. HEALY said, he would not press his Motion.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

(*Mr. Secretary Stanhope, Lord George Hamilton, The Judge Advocate General, Mr. Brodrick.*)

[BILL 179.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) objected.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman's objection does not hold good to a Bill of this nature, which is in pursuance of the provisions of a Statute.

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Thursday.*

COPYRIGHT (MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS) BILL.

(*Mr. Addison, Mr. Bartley, Mr. Dillwyn, Mr. Lawson.*)

[BILL 156.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH) (Bristol, W.) said, he was sorry to object; but he must ask the hon. and learned Member (Mr. Addison) to put it off for, say a fortnight, to allow of the considering and drafting of the necessary Amendments.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked why objection should be taken to the formal stage.

MR. SPEAKER: Objection being taken, the Bill of necessity stands over.

Committee *deferred* till *Monday* next.

CITY OF LONDON (FIRE INQUESTS) BILL.

Mr. Elton, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Murphy, Sir George Russell, and Mr. Woodall, *nominated* Members of the Select Committee on the City of London (Fire Inquests) Bill.—(*Mr. Stuart-Wortley.*)

MOTIONS.

GLEBE LANDS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Secretary Stanhope, Bill to facilitate the sale of Glebe Lands, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Secretary Stanhope, Mr. Raikes, and Mr. Stuart-Wortley.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 180.]

WAYS AND MEANS.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (NO. 1) BILL.

Resolutions [March 16] *reported*, and *agreed to*.

Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Jackson.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ENGLAND AND WALES) ELECTORS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Ritchie, Bill to provide for the qualification and registration of Electors for the purposes of Local Government in England and Wales, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Ritchie, Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Secretary Matthews, and Mr. Long.

Bill *pesented*, and read the first time. [Bill 181.]

NAVY ESTIMATES.

Ordered, That the Select Committee on Navy Estimates do consist of Seventeen Members.

Lord George Hamilton, Mr. Forwood, Mr. Hanbury, Mr. J. M. Maclean, Colonel Hill, Mr. Coddington, Admiral Mayne, Lord Charles Beresford, Mr. Caine, Mr. Sutherland, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Duff, Sir Edward Reed, Sir William Plowden, Sir Edward Grey, Dr. Tanner, and Mr. Crilly *nominated* Members of the Committee, with power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.

House adjourned at half after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 20*th March*, 1888.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*Second Reading*—Land Transfer (21).
Report—Lunacy Acts Amendment (22-48).
Third Reading—Statute Law Revision * (35), and *passed*.

LUNACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

(*The Lord Chancellor*.)

(NO. 22.) REPORT OF AMENDMENTS.

Amendments *reported* (according to Order).

Further Amendment *moved* and *negatived*.

EARL SPENCER, in moving the following Amendment:—

"Where an agreement has been entered into, or shall hereafter be entered into, between the committee of visitors for any county appointed to provide an asylum for the pauper lunatics of the said county, and the committee of visitors appointed to provide an asylum for the pauper lunatics of any borough, for the lodging, maintenance, medicine, clothing, and care of the said county asylum for each pauper lunatic not wholly chargeable to the said borough, then all money payable or to be paid under the said agreement for all charges (except lodging) for the pauper lunatics so belonging to the said borough shall (notwithstanding any Act of Parliament to the contrary) be paid in the following way—namely, the Guardians of the Union shall pay to the treasurer of the said asylum for each pauper lunatic within the said borough (and not wholly chargeable thereto) the same sum as shall from time to time be charged for each pauper lunatic in the lunatic asylum belonging to the said county, and the difference between that sum and the total sum to be paid under the said agreement by the said Committee of Justices for the said borough for each borough pauper lunatic as before mentioned, shall be a charge upon the borough rates, and paid by the treasurer of the said borough to the treasurer of the said asylum,"

said, that he had put down the Amendment to meet difficulties which had arisen in the working of a county asylum of which he was one of the visitors, and possibly in other cases. In the case of the county asylum of Northampton, rural districts comprised in the Union of Northampton were obliged to pay a higher rate than they otherwise would, because the borough within the area was non-contributory. This Amendment would, he thought, meet the difficulty.

LORD BALFOUR said, he hoped that their Lordships would not accept this Amendment, because not only would it make no alteration in the law, but it would not meet all cases which were now provided for. He thought that the noble Earl had overlooked the Act of 30 & 31 *Vict.*, which dealt with this question.

Amendment (by leave of the House) *withdrawn*.

Bill to be *printed* as amended; and to be read 3ª on *Friday* next. (No. 48.)

LAND TRANSFER BILL.—(No. 21.)

(*The Lord Chancellor*.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that it embraced the same objects by the same means as the Bill passed last year through their Lordships' House. The sole difference between the two Bills was, in substance, this—that, whereas in the Bill of last year certain alterations were made and Amendments added to Lord Cairns' Land Transfer Act of 1875, the Bill now before their Lordships repealed that Act and embraced the whole subject in one code. The object of the measure might be described as fourfold. First, as a further development of Lord Cairns' Act; secondly, as the application of compulsory registration; thirdly, as the clearing of the title within a shorter period—namely, a term of five years; and, fourthly, as the putting of real and personal estate on the same footing. No one could appreciate more than he did the observations of his noble and learned Friend (Lord Herschell) last year in reference to having one Act upon the subject. The effort to produce that result had been a matter of great difficulty, for it was not easy when one put two Acts together to make them harmonious, and it became necessary in some respects to repeal and in some respects to modify Lord Cairns' Act. He, therefore, proposed, if the Bill should be read a second time, to ask their Lordships to refer it to a Select Committee, so that it might have the benefit of the supervision of his noble and learned Friends. As to the question of compulsion, he adhered both to the general principle and to the method which he put before their Lordships last Session. Any one who was willing to act voluntarily would not lose anything by what he proposed, but he was convinced that the existing method of conveyancing and the circumstance that the same operation had to be repeated over and over again at the expense of the owners of land, was one of the peculiar difficulties attaching to its transfer. The great value of such an alteration as he suggested was the cheapening of the process. He insisted the more upon that because he had seen with some surprise the statement that the new system which he recommended would lead to further expense. Once the whole system was in working order no one, he thought, could doubt that all those long bills for examination of title, abstract of title, and going back into the history of titles for 40 years would be swept away, and the sole title a person would require was the entry of the land upon the register. The question of the period within which a good title might be established, considering the present facilities of publication, while preserving the rights which were necessary, might be a subject of considerable debate. He put the period at five years, though he had been warned that it should be extended to 12 years, while others said it ought to be reduced to two. He adhered to five years, as a period not unreasonable in itself and as one which our law recognized as reasonable. He did not think any injustice would be done to existing rights by fixing on five years. It was the existence of deeds and the necessity of looking after them which entailed all the expense. When once the property was registered owners might put their old deeds behind the fire. As to the assimilation of the law of real and personal estate, he saw that a noble Lord had given Notice that he would move that the Bill be read a second time that day six months on account of the proposed alteration of the law. So far as large estates of inheritance were concerned, except in the cases of lunatics and minors, who were unable to make wills, the Bill would make, he believed, no difference, because owners would make their wills. But in reference to freeholders and small owners of land, the present diposition of property in the event of intestacy was undoubtedly not that which they would make for themselves. No doubt the spread of education and the power of writing was so much extended that there could be no difficulty in making some simple disposition of their property; but if they did not make such a disposition it was only reasonable that the State should make for them such a will as they would, if they did not die intestate, be likely to make for themselves. He believed that it was absolutely essential to the success of the scheme that the rule-making clause should be very wide, and it was the same in this Bill as in the Act of 1875; but this and all the details of the Bill would be better discussed by the Select Committee. He begged to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

Lord ARUNDELL of WARDOUR, in rising to move that the Bill be read a second time that day six months, said, on the last occasion when he ventured to move the rejection of this Bill, he was afraid that some words of his were misconstrued by the noble and learned

Lord who sat on the Woolsack, in the sense of a personal attack. He wished to assure the noble and learned Lord that it was very far from his intention, and if his words had been reported the impression would have been removed from the noble and learned Lord's mind. He would now deal only with the Bill itself. He thought they had a right to take exception to the Bill on this ground —that whereas the Bill, so far as it caught the public eye, proposed to do one thing, it did in reality something quite different. Ostensibly the Bill was a simple Bill of Land Transfer. What it really would effect would be a radical and revolutionary change in the devolution of landed property, The clauses affecting entail and settlement were the operative clauses. It would abolish entail and primogeniture; but by all accounts it was very doubtful whether it would facilitate land transfer. In the discussion last Session it was pointed out by the noble Earl (the Earl of Feversham), who moved the Amendment to the 39th clause, that there was no demand for the abolition of the custom of primogeniture; that if properly understood by the freeholders they would see their interest in retaining it. But then it was said, though no one explained how or why, that its abolition was necessary to facilitate land transfer. In the absence of any arguments on the other side, he could only remark that if they abolished the custom of primogeniture they would have to give a separate registration for every child in the family, and if there were 10 children the complications would be tenfold. Whatever else, therefore, the abolition might do, he could not see how it could facilitate land transfer in the direction of simplification and economy. He wished their Lordships gravely to consider what would be the practical effect of their legislation. They must consider what would be likely to happen upon a property falling under the operation of the Bill. He would take a medium property, say of 3,000 acres, and suppose that it had to be divided among three sons, as there was no will. They were told that a man who did not make a will deserved no consideration; but he must remark that their legislation would take effect equally, whether a man neglected to make a will, or whether he made it and it was lost, or abstracted, or invalidated on the ground of some technicality. Well, they were supposing that some property, it might be some old historic place, had to be apportioned. The first conjecture was that the trustees would sell, in whole or in part; but purchasers were not so readily forthcoming in these days, and in the end it would depend upon the price. Moreover, he apprehended the mortgagees would have a word in the matter, as they would also have their slice of the property. If there was a sale there would only be the substitution of one family for another, or of a strange family for one who had always lived among the people and in the place. If no sale, perhaps their Lordships believed that the three brothers, with their wives and families, would all agree to live amicably together in the same house. It would be a curious condition of society; but he thought the more probable conjecture would be that as none of the brothers would have any motive for residence more than the others, that they would go their several ways, follow their respective careers, and naturally take all they could out of the land. In what way was the country to be benefited? They would have created three rack-rented properties, three absentee landlords, and left a deserted, tenantless, and desolate mansion as a ghost-like memorial of their legislation. No doubt this would, to a certain extent, be obviated if they were to exempt the mansion and demesne from the operation of the Bill, upon the precedent of Lord Cairns' Settled Estates Act; but according to the Bill the house as well as the land would have to be equally divided, which would give rise to endless complications. Under the operation of the Bill as it stood, he felt convinced that the families who had hitherto lived in the country, the families who connected them with the past would disappear more rapidly than they supposed, and that the proprietorship of land would pass under mortgage from the county to the town. The noble and learned Lord thought differently. He told them last Session that he expected very little political effect from the Bill; but the political effect which they seemed to deprecate would be exactly to the extent to which the Bill would be operative, and in every instance, and whenever it was operative, it would be by the ruin and extinction of some family in the manner he had indicated. There was one fact in connection with the question of primogeniture which he wished to keep in recollection —which was mentioned by the late Sir George Bowyer many years ago, in 1869, and it was this. Their Lordships knew that the equal system of division obtained in Kent under the name of Gavelkind. But at the time when Sir George Bowyer wrote, almost all land in Kent had been disgavelled on account of the inconvenience and confusion the system induced. As there was no more connection between the abolition of primogeniture and facility of transfer than between Tenterden Steeple and the Goodwin Sands, if they, the Conservative Party, decided to sacrifice the old properties and families in England, he could only suppose that they had done it on some other idea and motive, and the only one he could discover was the belief that they would thus increase, and in a manner they would wish, the number of freeholds; but even if they succeeded in doing so, as he pointed out last year, by abolishing the custom of primogeniture, they would undo with one hand what they were endeavouring to effect by legislation with the other. Under the operation of this Bill these freeholds would lapse, for they would only be preserved by being passed to one of the sons. He sufficiently discussed this point last year. He would only urge again a suggestion he then ventured to make, that if they decided—namely, if a majority of this House at a later stage decided—to abolish the custom of primogeniture, they might at least mitigate the evil of the change and meet some of the objections to it without any inconvenience beyond allowing one line in their register, in which the freeholder whom they compelled to register, might at the same time declare by what rule of devolution he would wish his property to pass in the event of intestacy or the loss or invalidation of his will. This would be only consistent with the liberty of bequest, which they proposed to respect, and might be the salvation of many a freehold. He could not see how the abolition of entail, any more than the abolition of primogeniture, could facilitate the transfer of land, for by the transfer he presumed was meant the transaction of transfer, and not any accidental political effects that might ensue from it. If the intention of this Bill was to bring land into the market, to redistribute the land, that intention ought to be avowed. The object would be better attained by direct legislation than through the indirect and circuitous medium of a Land Transfer Bill. He would assume, however, that they were discussing a Transfer Bill; and he asked how the abolition of entail was to facilitate transfer? The advocates of the Bill tell us that—"To assimilate, so far as they can be assimilated, the laws governing real and personal property would be a distinct gain to every person who buys or sells really." But how? The purchaser was presumably the person who complained. He, at any rate, had a grievance; but his grievance as matters stood, and it was the secret of the expense, was the rule of law which obliged the purchaser to prove the vendor's title; this was his grievance, and not the entail. As regarded the seller, when the limited owner, at any rate under Lord Cairns' Act, sold, he sold absolutely, and the purchaser took the land from the limited owner just as he would from the full owner. He might put it in this way. Did the limited owner, even under this Bill, sell or transfer in a different manner from the full owner? How did the entail come in? How could the devolution of property, or any law affecting it, affect the transfer any more than the knowledge of the next journey a horse was to take—whether it was to take a 1*s.* or a 20*s.* fare to Richmond—would affect the price or the conditions of purchase of the horse? He hoped the noble and learned Lord (Lord Bramwell) would pardon the liberty he was taking with an illustration which was fresh in their recollection. In the case of the sale of a race horse, he granted that the knowledge of what his subsequent career was likely to be was of importance on account of his engagements and liabilities; and so, too, if the limited owner in an entailed estate sold, subject to the entail, or passed on the land subject to the entail, no doubt a change in the law would be a boon to the purchaser, and something of this sort seemed always implied. But he sold absolutely; and, therefore, he concluded that the entail put no obstacle in the way of the transfer. He said more. He said it was not creditable—he left individuals and parties aside—he said it was not creditable to the legislation of this country that the wise system of entail should be abolished upon this plea and pretext. But if at this moment—that was, whenever there was a sale of land—the State were to step in and compel registration, and give a Parliamentary title, it could do so in a short document which might pass the estate ever afterwards, without any of the expense and unnecessary complications which the compulsory preliminary registrations of this Bill would involve. In both cases, no doubt, there would be compulsion; but human nature very differently resented compulsion when the necessity and utility was immediate and apparent, and when it was only remote and contingent. The first sale, whether under this Bill or any other scheme, must involve investigation and the production of deeds, but the second and subsequent sales might be made upon the Parliamentary title. And he would make this remark, that if the registration was enforced at the time of the sale it ought not to be accompanied with great additional expense, as it seemed to him that the proof of the vendor's title, which the purchaser had to make, ought to suffice for the enrolment in Court and for the Parliamentary title. The Incorporated Law Society, in giving its opinion on this Bill, said—"That the Council think that the Bill should aim rather at a guaranteed title than at an absolute and indefeasible title." He indicated last year two schemes—one by Mr. Pym Yeatman, the other by Mr. H. Tyrwhitt Frend—which aimed at giving guaranteed titles in a simple and inexpensive way. Mr. Tyrwhitt Frend, who had had large experience as a conveyancer, said, there would be no difficulty in giving Parliamentary titles to all good titles if the law which compelled the purchaser to prove the vendor's title were repealed. He noticed, however, that neither these learned Law Societies nor the noble and learned Lords, in discussing this question, had defined for them the precise difference between an absolute and a guaranteed title. Merely to clear his mind, and on the chance of eliciting information from the noble and learned Lord, he would venture to say that what he understood by a Parliamentary title was a title guaranteed upon the examination of the document produced, according to present knowledge, and an absolute title, the same guaranteed also as against future contingencies and events, as, for instance, the subsequent production of a deed not known to the parties to the transaction. If this were accepted, to all intents and purposes a Parliamentary title would be virtually an absolute title, for all good titles, all titles that were not disputed and disputable—which were the majority of titles. It would be an absolute title, except upon contingencies not in the least likely to occur, and it was doubtful whether the more solemn adjudication of this Bill would give anything more. Their Lordships were aware that a great deal of land had passed of late years under what were known as "short titles." This showed that the instinct of the public would be satisfied with Parliamentary titles, and this would suffice for all practical purposes. It required their Lordships' serious attention how far these short titles would be imperilled by this Bill. These "short titles" might not have satisfied all the technicalities of the law, although they might have satisfied the parties themselves. But if their administrator was to give an absolute title he must go beyond the document to the deeds behind, and then how many of these transactions would be set aside and these agreements re-opened? It might come about that under the operation of this Bill more land might be locked up in deadlock than under the strictest entails. They would have to consider also how hardly compulsory registration would press on the Building Societies and on the purchasers of small plots of ground. In many instances it was said that it would be prohibitory. He pointed out last year also how hardly compulsory registration would press on the landowners, and at the moment when they were least able to bear it. It was compulsory on a death—that was, on a succession to a property, when, as often as not, the owner had no income during the first year; and at this moment, when he had to incur all sorts of liabilities, without any advantage to himself, they compelled him to go to the expense of registration, and until he did so he would not be able to move hand or foot. Lord Herschell very generously, from his point of view, acknowledged the injustice of forcing a landowner to prove his possessory title at great expense, and without any corresponding advantage to himself. It was no exaggeration to say that, instead of facilitating transfer and liberating the land, the Bill would paralyze transfer, at any rate during the term of five years' possessory title, and beyond it in the "unproclaimed" districts, where the unfortunate proprietors would not even be privileged to call their property their own. He might quote from a pamphlet of the Law Society of the United Kingdom to that effect; but he understood that a noble Lord (Lord Stanley of Alderley) would deal with this branch of the question. He had only one consideration more to urge, and it was this—that in abolishing the custom of primogeniture they were voting away the principle upon which their Hereditary Chamber reposed. Of course, if their Lordships were prepared to accept the suggestions for their reform which had been recently made to them —if they intended to reconstitute themselves upon the elective principle to the exclusion of the hereditary—and their vote last night assured him they were not—they were consistent in passing the Bill. But if they were not prepared so to reconstitute themselves, he trusted their Lordships would realize that as soon as this Bill passed one more argument would be marshalled to the front against the existence of their Hereditary Chamber. It would be said that their House was in opposition to the spirit and sentiment of the law of the land, and they would have set their sign and seal to that. Every concession in these days was the signal for a new departure on the part of the Radical Party. He had a recollection, he thought, of a warning to this effect in eloquent language by the noble Marquess at the head of Her Majesty's Government—Are you wise, then, in throwing overboard your whole cargo as in this Bill? What! This Bill a simple Bill of Transfer! The Statute of Westminster repealed. Primogeniture, settlement, entail, all thrown overboard in one Bill. There has been nothing like it since the memorable sitting in the French Constituent Assembly, when the Nobles, in an access of enthusiasm or of panic, threw all their privileges to the winds. He must content himself with having registered his protest.

Amendment *moved*, to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months").—(*The Lord Arundell of Wardour.*)

LORD THRING said, he thought there were some points in the Bill which required further attention before it was read a second time. The Bill would seriously disturb the relations between vendors and purchasers. At present all the expenses of examination of title and conveyance were borne by the purchaser; but this Bill would make the vendor responsible for all the costs of transfer. It was absurd to assert that this Bill was little more than a re-enactment of Lord Cairns's Act. Almost every clause in that Act would be altered by the present Bill. This measure went much too far, for it would compel a man to register his whole estate when he made a settlement on his daughter or granted a small lease. Another of its provisions would prevent a man from enjoying an estate, however small, devolving upon him by deed or will until he should have registered it. He held that if he dealt with his estate by way of settlement the public were no more interested in the transaction than they were in the Moon, and therefore there was no ground in such a case for putting him to the expense of registering, a process which must involve the examination of deeds and the preparation of new maps. Registration would be excessively expensive, and except in cases of sale, and, perhaps, of mortgage, would be useless as far as the public were concerned, and most oppressive to the landowners. It was, in his opinion, a rash thing to tear to pieces the Act of 1875, when it had not been shown that one single clause of that Bill wanted amendment. The Act, he knew, had not succeeded; but the sole cause of its failure was bad administration. The only provision that was now required in connection with the registration of land was a simple clause enacting that in all cases of sale the purchase ought to be registered. The second part of the Bill dealing with the subject of intestacy he heartily approved, and he trusted that the abolition of primogeniture would lead to the abolition of the system of settling small estates. Nothing had done more to prevent unfortunate country gentlemen from raising their heads above water than that system.

Lord STANLEY of ALDERLEY said, he hoped the Bill would not be read a second time. The compulsory registration of land would inflict an immense expense on landowners, without any benefit to themselves, or, indeed, to the public, in the many cases where there was no intention or probability of sale. Besides this, the Bill would, if carried out, have the effect of bringing to a standstill all dealings with land for an indefinite period. If the Government thought that a general register of land was necessary, it already had the means of framing one without all this expense and vexation. They had all the materials for the register of land with a possessory title in the accounts of the Succession Duty Office, and it was only a matter of compilation. At this office the clerks examined not only wills, but also marriage settlements. As these accounts only dated from 1853, all the landowners who were alive before that date would not yet have deceased, so all the land would not yet have passed through the registers of that office, but a very few more years would bring all the land liable to Succession Duty under the notice of those officials. The method proposed by this Bill of cheapening land transfer was the very worst that could be adopted, since it would, all at once, cast a heavy burden on the whole property of owners who might not wish to sell at all, or only to sell a small part. There was much exaggeration about the cost of land transfer; under Lord Cairns's Act it was very trifling, and people who had the purchase-money ready, and who knew the circumstances of the property they wished to purchase, could do so cheaply under Lord Cairns's Act; but if they had to borrow the money the mortgagees required abstracts of title. According to his own experience last year in the case of the sale of property to the value of £5,800 in 20 holdings, the vendor's costs had been about 2 per cent, or an average of £5 11*s.* on each conveyance, and of £4 3*s.* on an average to each purchaser. If the Government wished to cheapen transfer of land in small quantities, let them abolish stamps on small purchases, and the saving to these purchasers would be greater than the amount of the stamp. It was evident that if this Bill passed and was carried out there would be an impossibility of registering all the land even in one district in any short space of time, and during that time neither sales nor purchases, nor even building leases, could take place, and the only object of this interruption of business and harassing legislation was to please a few doctrinaires who knew little of the subject they wrote about. The Law Society, on the one hand, and the Free Land League, on the other, were equally opposed to this Bill as involving great expense and hardship.

Lord HOBHOUSE said, he hoped their Lordships would not be induced to refuse a second reading to the Bill, although it contained some provisions which he could not approve. He was glad it was proposed to refer it to a Select Committee, in order that this complicated question might be dealt with, and result in the most workable measure that could be produced. He had never concealed his opinion that there was extreme difficulty in devising a simple system of transfer while keeping up a very complicated system of law. But a contrary opinion was held by great authorities, and was acted on last Session by this House. The object for them all now to aim at was to give the new system a start under the most favourable conditions. But the Bill was so framed as to cause a great amount of friction and vexation in the process of transition from an old system to a new one. In the 3rd clause it was provided that where a landowner died and his heir succeeded, that heir should have no right in land until registration. Now, a number of things had to be done before registration could be effected, so that for a long time a man would have no right except that of being registered as owner. In the meantime, he could not protect the estate against encroachment, cut timber, arrange with tenants, or do other things necessary in case of a new succession. Registration should not be required on succession. It was true that such an alteration would delay the completion of the register. But it was not the object of Parliament to enact registration from the mere abstract love of it; the object was to provide for greater facility in the transfer of land; facility of transfer implied the fact of transfer; and there need be no registration until it was necessary to effect transfer. He strongly recommended the reconsideration of the point, and the limitation of the obligatory clauses to those cases in which transfer was proposed. There were a number of charges that were not subject to registration of any kind; and disasters had happened from the occult nature of those charges. He should support the second reading, with the hope that modifications and Amendments would be introduced when it came before the Select Committee.

LORD DENMAN said, that the Incorporated Law Society, in sending objections to this Bill, had stated that if the House passed the second reading of this Bill, they admitted, in principle, that was incorrect. The noble and learned Lord the late Lord Chelmsford tried to establish this opinion; but every stage of an objectionable Bill was exposed to rejection. Registration was attempted in 1830 by Mr. Campbell, and Mr. Denman voted for it. Succession to real estates of intestates was proposed in 1870 in the House of Commons, and blamed by Lord Redesdale, and never revived till last year. The Settled Land Act was faulty in allowing a tenant for life to sell land against the will of those who were next in the entail relating to it. The late Lord Hindlip had wished him (Lord Denman) to sell land under it; but his brothers objected to the price, and he refused to sell it, and had refused a handsome price from the present Lord Hindlip. He had always guarded against profiting by any large price—securing any surplus beyond the rent to the tenant, who would have derived any benefit from it. He (Lord Denman) hoped that the Lord Chancellor would present three separate Bills, and he would certainly vote against the second reading of this Bill.

LORD HERSCHELL said, he was glad that the Bill re-enacted the Land Transfer Act of 1875, with the Amendments passed in 1887. But when he came to deal with the substance of the Bill there were certain matters to which he called attention last year, and on which he thought it necessary then to divide their Lordships on more than one occasion, which re-appeared in the measure this year, and to which his objections were as strong, if not stronger, than ever. They had been alluded to by some noble Lords, and they had an important bearing on the proposal to refer the Bill to a Select Committee. He did not think a Select Committee was the best tribunal for dealing with those matters, which involved questions of principle upon which the House was almost equally divided last year, and which, even if referred, had to be fought out again in a full House. If, on the other hand, the Select Committee was merely to deal with details of drafting, it would, he submitted, be a very unsatisfactory process. He should not so much object to a reference for drafting purposes if it took place after a Committee of the Whole House had settled the important matters to which he referred, and which went far beyond mere questions of drafting. It was important that the Bill should, as far as possible, speak with the same tongue, and that was best brought about by the responsibility resting really with the Minister who introduced the Bill aided by the draftsman who had drawn it. With regard to the provision requiring every owner of land before making a conveyance or settlement of his land to register his land, he thought the owner should not be bound to register more land than that which he proposed to convey or settle. To compel him to do more seemed to be throwing an expense upon the vendor, for which he got no return and which benefited nobody. The only argument he had heard used in favour of it was that, inasmuch as the owner of land would have to register before dealing with any portion of his land, he would reason that as he had to register a portion he might as well register the whole estate, and that such indirect compulsion would be a means of getting the land on to the register more quickly. He did not think that that was a sufficient reason for casting such a burden upon every landowner before he parted with any portion of the land, and it might probably even operate in the reverse direction to that which their Lordships would desire. They were all disposed to advocate an extension of the number of small owners of land, and he could not help seeing that the provision in question might be an actual impediment to the landowner selling small pieces of land here or there if he knew he could only do it, having first registered his title. Since the registration of land was made compulsory it would stop all current transactions, or all transactions about to become current until the registration was completed, and how long that would take nobody could tell. Those were his strong objections to the present provision, and they were not objections of drafting, but of principle. In the case of devolution by death, he admitted there might be more reason for saying that it was expedient to provide for compulsory registration; but, as he pointed out last year, he could not see what was to be the condition of things during the interval until some person, the successor to the estate, was put on the register. Certain land, he would suppose, devolved upon A B by death. Until he was registered he would have no right over the land except the right of being registered as owner; he could not grant a lease, deal with the property, or bring an action. What was to be the condition of things during that interval he did not know—an interval the duration of which it was impossible to state, because it would depend upon the amount of business in the Land Registry Office. They could only justify the compulsion of registration of that kind if it were rendered so simple and so cheap as not to be a burden. If such a system of registration was for the public benefit, so as to make land easily transferable, it was, he contended, expedient that the public should bear the burden of it, or, at least, that the burden should not rest upon the shoulders of those who, by registering a mere possessory title, really got nothing in respect of it. That depended on two things—on the fees established at the Land Registry Office, and on what was required from the individual who was to register a possessory title. Now that was provided for by rules laid down in Section 4, and it seemed to him that everything would depend on those rules. Unless the requirements were so laid down that a man might register his possessory title without any substantial burden, they would be inflicting upon him a burden for which there was no real justification. He could not help thinking that some of the rules seemed to be so absolutely vital to the measure that they ought to have them before them, because without these rules it was impossible to see how the Bill would work. Again, with regard to the devolution of property in cases of intestacy, while in some respects the law governing the administration of real estate was made similar to that affecting personal property, the two were not rendered completely similar, as there was the case in which the survivor of husband and wife was to have a life interest in real estate. That was something that did not exist now. He could not see why leaseholds should devolve in one way and freeholds in another. He could not help thinking that it was extremely undesirable, when they were assimilating the two laws, to create a new anomaly. The Bill would require very serious consideration in Committee.

EARL BEAUCHAMP said, that the clauses in regard to the devolution of real estate upon minors and lunatics should be looked at very carefully. Again, would a man have no right to make a devise of the estate which had devolved upon him before he was upon the register? If so, that might cause serious inconvenience. It was said that this Bill would compel every man to make his will; but if he must be upon the register first there might be an intestacy, and the property go amongst the next of kin. He, therefore, wished to know whether Clause 3, dealing with the effect of the order for compulsory registration, had not in reality an important bearing on the power of disposing by will owing to the disqualification imposed by the clause? The Bill of last year had escaped criticism on its second reading, and it had not been until the Committee stage that serious attention had been paid to the various provisions of the measure. He hoped that this would not be the case this year. If it was the case that in some important respects they were not assimilating the law of real and personal property, then all reason for this Bill disappeared, and one-half of it would crumble away. They were creating anomalies. They did away with entails, but allowed settlements, which effected the same thing. The Bill affected both large and small estates. In his opinion it would not have much effect upon large estates, which always took care of themselves, and would probably always be the subject of settlements; but as regarded small estates, he thought that the Bill would have a very serious effect. What were the usual reasons for desiring a change in the law? A law was either changed because it had grown out of consonance with the existing practice, or for the purpose of removing some admitted public inconvenience, or for the purpose of simplifying the machinery by which some process was effected, such as the substitution of a simple form of barring an estate tail by enrolling a deed in Chancery, instead of going through the tedious process of fine and recovery, and such as the institution of socage tenure under Charles II. The Bill sought to introduce an entirely new change into their customs; and what was the evidence of a desire for that change? Was there evidence that owners of property desired to divide it between their children? He did not know whether that was the case; but even if it were so, why should the division be imposed in the case of those who did not wish it? All the Law Courts were accustomed to estates tail, and they had a mass of law on the subject. But if this Bill passed they would have an entirely new set of decisions, and as the uncertainty of the law was proverbial a great deal of confusion would arise. Whom was this Bill intended to satisfy? It would not satisfy the ardent reformers, the Free Land League, and those who desired to upset the present system of landed estate. He submitted that there was much in the Bill which should be carefully dealt with in Committee.

The Earl of KIMBERLEY said, he quite agreed with much that had been said by the noble Earl (Earl Beauchamp). In discussing a Bill of this kind, so full of technicalities, they laboured under a great disadvantage, and yet it was a measure which seriously affected every one of their Lordships and every owner of real property throughout the country. Their Lordships ought, therefore, to make up their minds whether the Bill ought to pass in the interest of the owners of real property. Speaking generally, he was in favour of the principle of the Bill, and most certainly desired to see the second reading. With regard to the change proposed in the law of primogeniture, he was entirely in favour of the Bill. He did not think the change would be made because there was any great demand for it, but because the present system was anomalous and unfair. In case no disposition of real property was made, the whole of it went to the eldest son, and there was no provision for the younger children. That was not at all in accordance with our ideas of justice. The fair arrangement would be that every man should be at liberty to make such a disposition as he thought fit, even if he desired to leave all his property to his eldest son. But his object in rising was to make an appeal to noble Lords to weigh well what had been said by his noble and learned Friend. Reading the 2nd and 3rd clauses together, he asked their Lordships whether they wished to be placed under this legal harrow? The moment a district was declared to be a registered district, a man who had real estate within it could not do anything with the land. You must describe the nature of the rights you possess, and every one who had landed estate, especially building land, must know that there were a great variety of points to be determined before you could put it on the register. It must be remembered that unless there was a perfect army of officers different estates must wait their turn, a considerable time must, therefore, elapse before you could register your land, and during all that time you could not grant leases or perform any of the necessary acts which had to be done from day to day. He thought, therefore, they should deal with the land only when it was parted with by transfer. Anyone who succeeded to landed estate in this country would not, if the Bill became law, have any right over it until the land was registered, and anyone who had ever succeeded to a large estate must know what a length of time it took to ascertain everything which must be done before it could be placed on the register in full form. During the whole of that time a man would have no power of any sort or kind for dealing with the land. The business of the country would be brought to a stop in such a state of things. He was entirely in favour of a cheap, simple, and expeditious transfer, but he urged their Lordships to be careful not to put upon the owners of real property for the purpose of obtaining some ideal system of legislation at a time when they were suffering more acutely than for a generation past what he could not but call the intolerable burden of being compelled at great expense to register their estates. If the clauses were to pass in the form in which they now stood, he ventured to say there were many of their Lordships who would feel the registration a very considerable addition to the burdens they now had to bear. He made these remarks in no unfriendly feeling towards the Bill; but, after reading the Bill carefully, he believed it would be most unwise to pass it in its present form.

LORD CLIFFORD OF CHUDLEIGH said, he must complain of the absence from the Bill of any provision fixing the fees to be paid on registration, and other details in connection therewith. They were told that they would be charged fees which were to be fixed afterwards by the Land Transfer Board, and that the registrations must take place according to rules and regulations which the Lord Chancellor might at his pleasure afterwards decide upon. He did not for a moment suppose that those regulations would not be made in a proper and most economical manner, but he thought that the proposal was too indefinite. He also urged that a register of the owners of the land was not the only thing wanted. A register of the land itself was wanted to which intending purchasers might be able to refer, and he hoped that some arrangement would be made for providing an index of the land itself. He strongly objected also to the insurance clauses.

THE EARL OF FEVERSHAM said, the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack seemed to assume that the abolition of primogeniture in the devolution of real property would confer some benefit on the small freeholders of the country. He had taken some pains, when the Bill was before the House last Session, to adduce some reasons to show that that was not so, and if this Bill was to be referred to a Select Committee he would like to know whether evidence could not be taken on that subject? Was the Bill to be referred to a Select Committee merely for the purpose of perfecting the drafting of the Bill, or for the purpose of considering its various provisions? He hoped that Committee would be formed of those who held a variety of opinions on the subject, so that the matter might be thoroughly discussed, and he also hoped that some inquiry might be made as to the views held by the proprietors of land in this country upon this important subject. He would be glad to learn that that would be the case. He hoped that if the Bill went to a Select Committee there would be a most searching and very perfect inquiry with the result that the Bill would meet with substantial amendment.

LORD ARUNDELL OF WARDOUR observed that, although no one had said a word in favour of the Bill, he would, after the discussion they had had, with the permission of their Lordships, withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

LORD HALSBURY said, that after the discussion that had taken place he might be allowed to make a few remarks. He admitted that he had assumed, perhaps too rashly, that there was a general assent on the part of the House that this Bill, which was in substance the same Bill as that of last Session, should, at all events, be allowed to pass its second reading. He had certainly not expected at this stage the amount of friendly criticism which had been poured upon it, and he doubted very much if he could conscientiously recommend this Bill to their Lordships if he believed the criticisms that had fallen from the Front Opposition Bench were well founded. There was no part or principle of the Bill that had not been attacked, and, as a noble Lord had observed, not a word had been spoken in its favour. He did not think the noble and learned Lord on the Front Bench (Lord Herschell) was at all justified in assuming that among a Select Committee of lawyers his views would prevail rather than those that he now submitted to their Lordships. On a previous occasion, when this Bill was under consideration, both the noble and learned Lords (Lord Selborne and Lord Bramwell) took the same views as he himself did. It might be that they were wrong, but he hoped that their Lordships would not assume that the opinion of lawyers was necessarily in favour of the noble and learned Lord's views. The noble and learned Lord had made a violent attack upon the Bill, and especially upon the principle of compulsory registration. A Bill dealing with this subject had been before the House on two occasions—in 1859 and in 1874—and on both occasions the Bill proposed compulsory registration. Lord Cairns, however, who was in charge of the Bill of 1874, dropped the compulsory registration clause, as it would otherwise have affected a class of very small transactions. That was quite intelligible, so long as an examination of title was required, but it was not required by this Bill. Anyone satisfied with a possessory title would, after the stipulated interval of time, obtain an absolute title. All, therefore, that the noble and learned Lord said on this point was quite irrelevant. When once the system was established it would work just as the noble and learned Lord himself suggested it should. But it was necessary to start the system, and that was the difficulty. The Act of 1875 had been a complete failure, and he could not agree that the cause of this was the maladministration of the office. The reason it failed was that the system was most unsatisfactory, and merely assisted people in registering the defects in their title. The consequence was that they did not register at all. He would not reargue the question whether the vendor or vendee should be called upon first to register. He thought the proper thing would be to call upon the vendor to do so, but this was not a cardinal point of the Bill, though no doubt a very useful and important one, and it could be settled as the House might hereafter decide. It was an entire mistake to suppose that Clause 71 in any way affected the devolution of property. It merely provided for the registration in case of death of the personal representative of the deceased. The noble Earl on the Front Opposition Bench had dwelt upon the appalling state of things that this would lead to. But no such difficulties were experienced in the case of personal property, even when a millionaire or banker died. In such case no one was legally entitled to the personal property until administration or probate had been granted; but, nevertheless, no practical difficulty or inconvenience was experienced. The world went on notwithstanding, and so it would be with regard to the devolution of real estate. All the objections that had been suggested were objections which would be fatal to any system that could be devised in regard to land transfer. They were all agreed that a great evil existed in the enormous expense incurred in dealing with and transferring property, yet when a proposal was made to sweep this expense away it met with something very like opposition. If this Bill were administered in the spirit in which it was conceived, and people in the case of small parcels of land were satisfied with a temporary possessory title, to be subsequently converted into an absolute title, the expense would be absolutely trifling. In proportion as the parcels of land increased the expense would, no doubt, be greater, and where an absolute title was at once required this would entail the expense of an examination into the title. Where persons were contented with a possessory title the transfer would be affected by the transfer of a piece of paper and the registration. He hoped their Lordships would consent to refer the Bill to a Select Committee. He was surprised at the attitude taken up on this point by the noble and learned Lord (Lord Herschell), for last year when the Bill was before their Lordships he appeared to be all in favour of a Select Committee.

LORD HERSCHELL said that, while he repeated his general approval of the Bill, he could not quite understand why the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack should be surprised at the observations he had made on various points dealt with in the Bill, having regard to the fact that he made the same criticisms on the Bill last year, and felt so strongly with respect to some of them that he divided the House on more than one occasion. The reason he objected to the proposal to refer the Bill to a Select Committee was that there were questions of principle and not of mere drafting involved, and those were questions which ought to be decided by the House itself. He suggested that the Bill should be dealt with in Committee by their Lordships, in order that all questions of principle might be settled in the House and that the Bill should afterwards be referred to a Select Committee so that the drafting might be revised.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY) did not agree that there were only questions of principle and questions of drafting to be disposed of. There was another matter about which it was important that the House should have adequate information, and that was as to the exact meaning and effect of the Bill. There was at present considerable dispute as to what its effect would be. The appointment of a Select Committee would bring together the men most able to discuss that question, and by their Report the House would learn pretty well what were the grave questions of policy remaining behind upon which a decision could only be taken in that House. He confessed—of course, supposing he had no previous knowledge or opinion on the subject—after listening to the noble and learned Lord (Lord Herschell) and the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, he would be most incompetent to form an opinion, unless he got them into a room and cross-examined them both. The discussion of so complicated a Bill as this by 10 or even 20 rival lawyers in their Lordships' House would not supply a thorough knowledge of the details of so complex a measure. On the other hand, the ordinary practice of putting it through the mill of a Select Committee would probably result in its issuing in such a shape that it would be easy for the House to decide upon points of policy.

Motion *agreed to*; Bill read 2^a accordingly.

EMIGRATION OF PENSIONERS TO NEW ZEALAND.

QUESTION.

In reply to Lord SANDHURST,

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Lord HARRIS) said, that the Treasury and the Colonial Office had consented to appoint Representatives to serve on a Departmental Committee, before whom the question of emigration of pensioners to New Zealand would come. He hoped that the Committee would begin to sit shortly.

House adjourned at half past Seven o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 20th March, 1888.

The House met at Two of the clock.

MINUTES.]—NEW MEMBER SWORN—David Alfred Thomas, esquire, *for* Merthyr Tydvil Borough.

SELECT COMMITTEE—Emigration and Immigration (Foreigners), *nominated.*

PRIVATE BILL (*by Order*)—*Third Reading*—South Indian Railway, and *passed.*

PUBLIC BILLS — *Ordered* — *First Reading* — Public Worship Facilities * [183]; Public Health (Prevention of Infectious Diseases, &c.) * [184]; Clerks of the Peace * [185].

Second Reading—Consolidated Fund (No. 1).*

Committee—Report—National Debt (Conversion) * [164]; East India (Purchase and Construction of Railways) * [143].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY BILL

(*by Order*).

THIRD READING.

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

DR. CLARK (Caithness) said, the Bill gave additional powers to the Government in connection with the South Indian Railway Company, and empowered the Company, for the purpose of carrying into effect any contract or agreement entered into under the powers of the Act, with the sanction of the Secretary of State in Council, to raise money for the purposes of the Bill. As a matter of fact, the Bill would enable the Government to buy up the Company, paying £126 for every £100 Stock. He objected to any new Stock being created, or of any powers being taken which would enhance the value of the existing capital. However, he did not intend to discuss the question at that moment.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth) said, he did not gather from what the hon. Member had just said whether he intended to withdraw his opposition to the Bill or not.

DR. CLARK: Yes, Sir.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

QUESTIONS.

POST OFFICE—PARCEL POST TO NEW ZEALAND.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston) asked the Postmaster General, Whether any progress is being made with the arrangements for extending the Parcel Post to New Zealand; and, when a Parcel Post between Great Britain and New Zealand may be expected to be established?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): The Department is quite prepared to arrange for the extension of the Parcel Post to New Zealand as soon as the Colony is ready, and proposals with this object have long since been made to the Colonial Post Office. But the Colony has, as yet, gained little experience of the working of its Inland Parcel Post, and while in this position has been unwilling to exchange parcels with the Mother Country. I propose, however, to communicate again with the Colony, and to urge the further consideration of the matter.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—THE ARTILLERY VOLUNTEERS—MARTINI-HENRY RIFLES.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether, although a certain proportion of Martini-Henry rifles have been issued to Artillery Volunteers, they are not allowed any Martini-Henry ammunition, and are thus unable to compete with Infantry corps in musketry, which operates prejudicially upon their recruiting; and, in such case, whether it would be possible to allow Artillery Volunteers to draw the ammunition suited for the small arms in their possession?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): At the time when Infantry Volunteers were armed with the Snider rifle a certain number of Martini-Henry rifles were entrusted to the National Rifle Association for distribution to Volunteer corps. They appear to have issued some to Artillery Volunteers; but the Martini-Henry is not recognized as the arm of the Artillery Volunteers, nor would it, under present circumstances, be used by them on service. This being the case, I am not prepared to issue Martini-Henry ammunition to them at the public expense, it being important that there should be uniform issues to the same arm of the Service.

THE FOOD SUPPLY—FOREIGN MEAT.

Captain COTTON (Cheshire, Wirral) asked the Secretary to the Local Government Board, Whether his attention has been drawn to the increasing quantity of foreign meat sold as English meat, at English prices, in this country; and, whether the Government will take any steps so to amend the law that, in future, this imported meat shall only be sold as such?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) (Bristol, W.) (who replied) said: I beg to refer the hon. and gallant Member to the answer which I gave on the 1st of March to the hon. Member for the Maldon Division of Essex (Mr. C. W. Gray). I believe, also, though I cannot give an authoritative opinion, that the sale of foreign imported meat as English meat, when English meat is demanded, is an offence under Section 6 of the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1875; and, therefore, I do not see that any further legislation is required.

THE FOOD SUPPLY—ADULTERATED CHEESE FROM CANADA.

Captain COTTON (Cheshire, Wirral) asked the Secretary to the Local Government Board, Whether, in reference to his statement that inquiries are being made of the American Consul respecting the alleged adulteration of cheese imported from that country, his attention has been directed also to the increasing quantity of imported cheese from Canada, and, in view of the possible adulteration thereof, the Government will communicate with the Agent General of the Dominion as well as with the American Consul?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Long) (Wilts, Devizes): The Agricultural Department has requested the Colonial Office to obtain from Canada similar information to that which, as I stated last Tuesday, our Consular officers in the United States have been instructed to furnish as to the practice of using animal fat in the manufacture of cheese.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—EVASION OF CONDITIONS.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether his attention has been called to a letter dated the 20th of October, 1887, signed "Denis Godley," on behalf of the Irish Land Commission, in which the statement was made that the Commission had found it needful to inform the solicitor of a landlord that promissory notes taken by him from tenants for payment of rent, after completion of purchase of the holdings, "must be cancelled, before any order for payment can be made;" whether any other instances of such a practice have come to the notice of the Commission; and, whether he is satisfied every precaution is taken by the Treasury to prevent the advance of public moneys to persons thus attempting to evade one of the conditions under which they obtain it?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I am informed by the Irish Land Commission that this is the only instance of the practice to which the hon. Member refers which has come under their notice; and that, as he is aware, they declined to sanction it as irregular, and required the promissory notes in question to be lodged with them to be cancelled before they could permit any advance to be made. The action of the Commissioners in this case is, of course, what they would take in other similar cases if any came before them, and is, I think, perfectly satisfactory.

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE ACT, 1875—VISITORS OF CHANCERY LUNATICS.

Mr. PICTON (Leicester) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the Supreme Judicature Act, 1875, section 31, abolished the work as well as the office of Secretary to the Board of Visitors of Chancery Lunatics; and, if not, how has the work been done since the Act was passed; whether the whole responsibility for the work in the Office of the Board, including important and voluminous correspondence with the three Visitors, with the Secretaries of the Lord Chancellor, with the Secretary of the Lords Justices, the Masters in Lunacy, the Commissioners in Lunacy, the committees, solicitors, and relatives of the Chancery lunatics, as well as with the patients themselves in their lucid intervals, is dependent on a first clerk; and, whether there is any other case in which such responsibilities are placed on a first clerk, without statutory recognition?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): No, Sir; the Act in question did not abolish the work of this Office. It only abolished the Secretary. The work referred to is now done by the head clerk. The Royal Commissioners who inquired into the Office in 1874 do not agree with the hon. Member in his description of the work in the Office. They recommended the abolition of the Office of Secretary, and saw no difficulty in the discharge of his duty by the first clerk. The head clerk, as far as I am aware, has the same recognition as, and not greater responsibilities than, other head clerks in the Public Service.

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—PROBATES AND LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION — DISTRICT PROBATE REGISTRIES.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the District Probate Registries are exclusively occupied with the granting of unopposed Probates and Letters of Administration and similar business, and whether they perform any duties connected with the administration of justice; whether the stamps which are paid for in their offices are paid direct to the Inland Revenue Department, or are any portion of such stamps included in the sum of £371,759 6*s.* 11*d.*, mentioned at the foot of p. 220 of the Civil Service Estimates for this year; whether he will consider the advisability of transferring the cost of the District Probate Registries to some other head; whether the County Court Registries in Bankruptcy, the Vote for which is referred to as being an addition to the cost of the Supreme Court of Judicature, are wholly occupied with bankruptcy business, and ought to be set against the surplus of £58,300 appearing to arise in the Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade (Class 2, Vote 9, p. 121, Civil Service Estimates); how are the items of the expenditure of the

£17,650 (same Vote, at p. 220, of Estimates) made up; does it include any items for District Probate Registries; can any estimate be formed as to the proportion of the Vote for the Supreme Court of Judicature attributable to the administration of the Criminal Law; can any estimate be formed of the total net cost after allowing for stamps and other extra receipts of the administration of the Civil Law; and, whether, in view of the fact that the stamps and extra receipts in the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice more than pay the cost of administering that branch of judicature, he will consider the question of appointing an additional Judge of that Division?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): The District Registries of the Probate Division are by statute attached to, and under the control of, the High Court of Judicature. They exist primarily for the purpose of safeguarding the transmission of property by will, and not for revenue purposes. The fees taken are not paid to the Inland Revenue, but form part of the fee receipts of the High Court; and the cost of maintenance of the District Registries appears to be properly chargeable to the same Vote as that of all other Administrative Departments of the Court. Bankruptcy work in the County Courts is performed by the Court Registrars; and their remuneration for this work, and the office and other expenses connected with it, is debited to the bankruptcy account, and not to that for the Supreme Court. The item of £17,650 in the Vote for the Supreme Court includes the following charges connected with the District Probate Registries:—Works and repairs, £700; cleaning, lighting, and miscellaneous, £1,300; furniture, £100; rents, £930—total, £3,030. It is not possible accurately to distinguish the proportions of the Supreme Court Vote, or of the net cost attributable to the administration of the Criminal and Civil Law respectively. I am not aware that the stamps and extra receipts of the Chancery Division do more than pay the cost of administering that branch of judicature. In answer to the last Question of my hon. Friend, I am placing on the Table to-day a Notice of a Resolution for the appointment of an additional Judge.

THE TOLERATION ACT — NONCONFORMISTS IN YORKSHIRE.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to a leading article in *The Echo* of the 15th of March, in which it is stated that, at Harewood and Dunkeswick, in Yorkshire, the Wesleyan Methodists are not allowed by the Earl of Harewood to hold their Service during Church hours; are not allowed to administer the Sacraments; and are not allowed to hold a Sunday School; whether such conditions are consistent with the terms of the Toleration Act and the religious rights of Nonconformists; and, whether the Government see their way to take any steps to secure religious liberty in the villages named?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I am informed by the Earl of Harewood that the Wesleyan Chapel at Harewood is held at a nominal rent under an agreement, dating more than 70 years back, subject to the conditions described in the Question. There never has been a Wesleyan Chapel at Dunkeswick; and I am informed that the present arrangement, by which meetings are held by leave of the farmers or householders, is considered sufficient by the Wesleyan inhabitants of that parish. I cannot give an opinion as to the legal validity of the agreement under which the chapel at Harewood is held; but the Earl of Harewood thinks the questions which have arisen can be satisfactorily settled between him and his neighbours on the spot, and he is communicating directly with them for that purpose, so that I hope all cause of complaint may be removed.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM asked, if the right hon. Gentleman had seen the correspondence between the President of the Wesleyan Conference and the Earl of Harewood, in which, the Conference having called attention to certain facts, the Earl of Harewood simply acknowledged the receipt of the letter?

Mr. MATTHEWS could not say that he had seen the correspondence. He was under the impression that a newspaper had been sent him which contained some correspondence in it.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION—SUB-COMMISSIONS IN LONGFORD.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, When will a Sub-Commission sit to fix fair rents in County Longford; in how many cases have the Land Commission transferred originating notices from the County Court to Sub-Commissions since August last; has this involved great delay in the hearings; are these transfers made for the landlords, as a matter of course, despite the objections of tenants; can he now state the intentions of Government as to appointing at once a Sub-Commission for every Irish county, so that the operation of the eviction notices, which delay favours, may to some extent be met; and, will the County Longford Sub-Commission sit in Granard, in order to shorten the distances tenants have to come?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Land Commissioners inform me that a date has not yet been fixed for the next Sub-Commission sitting in the County Longford. The number of cases transferred in that county from the County Court to the Land Commission from September 1, 1887, to March 17, 1888, was 20. Great delay does not appear to have been involved thereby. Transfers are not made as a matter of course. The practice of the Land Commissioners in regard to them is clearly expressed in their Rules. Each application for transfer must be supported by an affidavit that it is not made for the sake of delay; and the opposite party is given an opportunity of showing any grounds whereby the transfer could be unreasonable. As to the last paragraph but one, the Government are anxiously considering what improvement, if any, can be made, so as to deal efficiently with the formidable mass of arrears. In consequence of the difference in the size of the counties, it would be manifestly impossible to have a Court sitting for every county in Ireland. The Commissioners state it has always been the custom of the Sub-Commission to have a sitting in Granard; and they see no reason to suppose that they will depart from that practice.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Might I ask the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, if the Land Commissioners have given any reason why a Sub-Commission has not sat in Longford, and why the people of Longford are to be delayed any more than any other county?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I do not think, as far as I am informed, that there has been any unreasonable delay.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Is the right hon. and gallant Gentleman aware that a Sub-Commission has not sat in this county for 12 months, while the people are anxiously awaiting it, and numbers of eviction notices have been served?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I am aware, from personal knowledge, that the Sub-Commission has sat in Longford within such a remote period.

FISHERIES (ENGLAND AND WALES)—REGULATION OF FISHERIES IN MORECAMBE BAY.

Lord EDWARD CAVENDISH (Derbyshire, W.) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether it is the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill, during the present Session, for the preservation and regulation of the shell fish and other fisheries in Morecambe Bay and the Estuary of the Duddon?

The PRESIDENT (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) (Bristol, W.): I have now under consideration proposals for the regulation of the English Coast Fisheries within territorial limits; and if I should find that they would be likely to receive the support of hon. Members representing the constituencies affected by them I may be able to propose legislation on the subject this Session; but I am not prepared to legislate for the particular district alone to which the noble Lord refers.

Mr. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire) asked, how it was possible for Members representing seaside constituencies to know the provisions of this Bill?

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I have been in communication with some hon. Members on this subject, and I expect before long to receive a deputation from them. I shall be able to answer any Questions on the subject better after I know what they desire.

MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.) asked the Lord Advocate, whether the Scotch Department intended to legislate this Session with regard to the fisheries on the coast of Scotland?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities) asked for a few days' Notice of the Question.

WAR OFFICE (STORES)—SALE OF DISUSED CLOTHING.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether the disused clothing of the whole Army (except in India) was, on the occasion of the last contract, disposed of for three years in advance, the Government and the contractor being both in ignorance of the real quantity, quality, or value of the stores so sold; whether only two firms were permitted to tender; whether the whole quantity, of the value of about £50,000, was included in one contract, and the opportunity of competing thus strictly limited to very large firms; whether, at the Admiralty sale by public auction at Deptford last month, trousers similar to those sold in the above contract at 9*d.* fetched 6*s.* 6*d.*, red Kersey tunics similarly sold at 6½*d.* fetched 1*s.* 2*d.* to 1*s.* 11*d.*, and leggings sold by contract at 3*d.* fetched 8*d.*; whether this contract expires during this month, and what steps have been taken as to a new contract; and, whether he will undertake that, in future, the system of speculative sales in advance shall be discontinued, and the contracts for disused stores shall be made by open competition, and in such smaller quantities as to make competition possible?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. BRODRICK) (Surrey, Guildford) (who replied) said: Clothing which has been worn for the regulated period is disposed of under a contract made for three years. There is sufficient knowledge derived from experience of quantity and quality to enable both the Departments and the contractor to make a forecast for that period. Boots are disposed of separately; but all other articles of clothing are thrown together into one contract. The contract was publicly advertised, and three firms tendered. The prices obtained for some small lots sold by the Admiralty were as stated in the Question; but there is nothing to show that the condition of the garments sold was not far superior to that of Army clothing. The contractor collects the garments from all the stations at home and abroad; and the contracts are made with one contractor for all the garments to avoid the labour and expense of local contracts, and to secure that neither blue nor scarlet garments shall be disposed of as garments in the United Kingdom except to bands and other recognized bodies. The contract now expiring will be renewed by public competition, and greatcoats will probably be made the subject of a separate contract.

LAND PURCHASE (IRELAND) ACT, 1885—THE SKINNERS' ESTATE, CO. LONDONDERRY.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether his attention has been called to two circular letters addressed to the tenants of the Skinners' Estate, County Londonderry, urging them to purchase their holdings, and containing the following sentences:—

> "Gentlemen,
>
> "It is necessary that you should decide finally, and at once, whether you will purchase the fee-simple of your holdings * * * I shall assume that those who do not purchase on one or other of those days have decided to remain as tenants, and I shall, on the 22nd instant, return their names to Mr. Young, so that he may collect the arrears of rent from them.
>
> "Yours faithfully,
> "R. H. Todd.
>
> "Londonderry, 12th Feb. 1888."
>
> "Londonderry, 25th Feb. 1888.
>
> "Gentlemen,
>
> * * * * "the Company have decided not to change the terms and to collect the rents from non-purchasing tenants without delay * * * *
>
> "Yours truly,
> "R. H. Todd."

And, whether he will refuse to sanction advances of public money to complete purchases of holdings whenever it appears that pressure has been used to induce tenants to buy, either by a threat to collect rents from "non-purchasing tenants without delay," or by the issue of ejectment notices for the recovery of arrears in cases where there has been no opportunity of recent adjudication of the rents in the Land Courts?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): No advances have been made to tenants for the purchase of their holdings on the Skinners' Company's Estates since December last, six weeks before the earliest of Mr. Todd's letters. Whenever the Land Commission sanction advance they give the purchasing tenant a month in which to apply for a stay of proceedings on any ground; and they never make an advance unless they are satisfied that the agreement of purchase has not been entered into under duress or obtained by threats. They are strongly opposed to any unfair pressure being put on tenants to induce them to purchase.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Might I ask the right hon. Gentleman, if he considers the issuing of a writ against a tenant and the placing of it in the Sheriff's hands is duress?

MR. GOSCHEN: I should think that that might come under the term "duress;" but I am not aware that in this case to which I have called attention there has been anything of the kind, and the hon. and learned Member will observe that no advance has been made since December.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Then I can inform the right hon. Gentleman that the Land Commissioners have decided that the state of things to which I have referred was not duress.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

NATIONAL DEBT (CONVERSION) BILL—PENSIONS TO NATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS.

MR. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) (for Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR) (Donegal, E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If he will state how the Fund, now amounting to about £1,330,000, appropriated from the Church Surplus for the provision of pensions to National School Teachers in Ireland, will be affected by the proposed scheme of Conversion of the Three per Cent Debt?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): Of the total sum of £1,330,000 spoken of by the hon. Member, £1,300,000 is a book debt due by the Irish Land Commission to the Fund, upon which they are bound, by the Act of 1879, to pay interest to the National Debt Commissioners at the rate of 3 per cent, so long as it remains outstanding, out of the Church Revenues. The small sum remaining is invested in the names of the National Debt Commissioners in various Stocks. Any conversion must be limited to this sum, and its effect on the income of the Fund would be trifling.

POST OFFICE—OFFICIALS AT POLITICAL MEETINGS.

MR. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) (for Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR) (Donegal, E.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether his attention has been called to the fact that Mr. J. F. Wight, of the Money Order Department, General Post Office, presided at a political meeting of the Primrose League, in the Lecture Hall, St. Aubyn Road, Upper Norwood, at which, among others present upon the platform, were the hon. Members for Croydon, Norwood, Dulwich, East Bradford, &c.; and, whether members of the Post Office staff, who belong to other Political Associations, will be allowed a similar liberty?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): Mr. Wight did preside at the meeting of the 25th of February. Shortly afterwards he informed me that he had resigned his position on the Primrose League as Ruling Councillor. There is a well-known Rule of the Post Office which forbids Postmasters from taking part in election or other active political meetings, although the same Rule does not apply with the same force to the actions of other persons in the Service in localities where they are not engaged on duty. I think the practice is certainly one which should be discouraged.

TORQUAY HARBOUR AND DISTRICT ACT, 1886—THE SALVATION ARMY.

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he has had under consideration the case of a number of members of the Salvation Army, ratepayers and inhabitants of Torquay, at present suffering imprisonment for marching in procession with music on various Sundays to their place of worship; whether the offence of these men is any offence at Common Law, or whether it is an offence created by a clause of "The Torquay Harbour and District Act, 1886;" whether he has received a Memorial from these men, stating—

> "We have been accustomed to witness and take part in such marches ever since the Salvation Army was established in this town six years ago, and we were never threatened with punishment for so doing till the enactment of the Torquay Harbour and District Act;"

whether they further stated that—

> "We never heard of any proposal to insert in the said Act a clause prohibiting such marches, and do not believe that any notice of such clause was given to the ratepayers before the passing of the Act;"

and that—

> "In marching with music to our place of worship we act from a conscientious conviction of our duty to God, and to those who are by such marches only induced to attend our place of worship, and who would, were such marches discontinued, attend no place of worship at all;"

and, whether he will take steps to mitigate the sentence passed on these men.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; this case has been under my consideration. The offence was against the Torquay Harbour Act, 1886, s. 38. I have received a Memorial containing the words quoted. There have been for two years past numerous prosecutions in Torquay under the section referred to. In the earlier cases the summonses were withdrawn, on the understanding that the offence would not be repeated. In later cases fines have been imposed, the magistrates conceiving that they were bound to enforce the law, while the defendants conceived that it is their conscientious duty to disobey it. In the case under consideration the defendants were sentenced to pay fines, and went to prison in default of payment—nine of them for a fortnight, which will end on Thursday next, and six, who had been previously convicted of the same offence, for a month. These sentences were within the jurisdiction of the magistrates, and do not appear to have been excessive. There is, moreover, a right of appeal, which has not been exercised. Much as I regret that the defendants should have placed themselves in collision with the law, I do not feel justified in interfering with the sentences.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) asked whether, when this Act (which was a private Act) was passed, the attention of the House was called by the Committee to which the Bill was referred specially to this new legislation. He asked this Question, because for some years he had the honour of being a Member of the Committee to which Police and Sanitary Bills were referred, and they declined to insert what were called the Salvation Army Clauses. When the subsequent Committee reversed that judgment, was the attention of the House called to the point?

MR. MATTHEWS: Of that I am not aware. I looked this morning at the proceedings of the Committee. I think Lord Basing was Chairman on that particular Bill. The clause, as originally proposed, was different in form to that which the Memorialists alluded to. It was a clause giving the Local Board power to prohibit processions on any day, and also power to permit them. The Committee refused to allow the clause in that shape, saying that they had well considered the subject on the Hastings Bill; and they consequently gave the Local Board the clause absolutely prohibiting noisy processions on Sundays. Whether it was brought to the attention of the House specially I do not know.

MR. BARRAN (York, W.R., Otley) inquired, whether the Act of Parliament in question applied to the Sunday parades of Volunteers with their bands?

MR. MATTHEWS: I think there is a clause which specially exempts bodies of a military character.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE NAVY—CAPTAIN HALL, DIRECTOR OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE.

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD (Marylebone, E.) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether, considering the valuable evidence which Captain Hall, the Director of Naval Intelligence, could give concerning the present organization for war, he will insure that Captain Hall can be called before the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Administration of the Navy, whether he is in command of a ship or not?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): The Royal Commission must necessarily be the only judges of the evidence they require to fulfil the duties imposed on them; and the Admiralty will be glad to assist them in any way they can by obtaining for them such information, Whether they call before them the Head of the Naval Intelligence Department is a matter which must entirely be left to their discretion.

WALES—THE TITHE AGITATION—DISTURBANCES IN ANGLESEY.

MR. J. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he will lay upon the Table the Report received by him from the Chief Constable of Anglesey as to the alleged tithe disturbances in that county?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): This Report contains matter of a confidential nature which I should not be justified in disclosing. I must, therefore, decline to lay it upon the Table of the House.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (IRELAND)—PAYMENTS TO ROAD CONTRACTORS—TIPPERARY, N.R.

MR. P. J. O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the moneys earned by the road contractors in the North Riding of the County of Tipperary for a period of eight months came due at the recent Assizes at Nenagh on the 5th and 6th instants, when, as usual, cheques for payment should be issued; whether these contractors, numbering over 500, mostly poor men, are yet unpaid; whether many of them reside at a distance of 20 miles from Nenagh, where they have had to come applying for their money; and, whether complaints have reached him that this is owing to the neglect of "the Clerk of the Crown and Peace" in not signing the cheques duly certified for; and, if so, whether he will have instructions issued to that official to have the payments made without further delay?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, the Question had been referred to Ireland for report, and the Report had not yet been received. He had telegraphed again for the information, and for an explanation as to the reason for the delay.

HAYTI—IMPRISONMENT OF MR. COLES.

COLONEL DUNCAN (Finsbury, Holborn) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, owing to the great, although unavoidable, delay in the Foreign Office in printing the unopposed Correspondence in connection with the imprisonment of Mr. Coles, a British subject, in Hayti, he will afford facilities for a brief discussion on the subject after Easter, as soon as the Correspondence is upon the Table of the House?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I regret I am not in a position to promise to my hon. and gallant Friend the facilities he asks for.

COLONEL DUNCAN said, that he should call attention to the matter on the Diplomatic Vote.

PARLIAMENT—ELIGIBILITY OF FOREIGN AGENTS.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, with reference to the statement that the hon. Member for Caithness is the Consul General for the Transvaal Republic, Whether it is competent for the authorized and paid Agent of a Foreign State to sit and vote as a Member of this House?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am informed that there is no Statute or Rule of the House which disqualifies Members from sitting in this House by reason of their being the authorized, or even the paid Agents of Foreign States. I admit that such a position would be somewhat incongruous; but I am informed by the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) himself that his position as Consul General is purely honorary, and that he receives no pay whatever. Under these circumstances, I think there is nothing that calls for the attention of the House.

REVISED EDITION OF THE STATUTES—PUBLICATION.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, in the event of the Statute Law Revision Bill (House of Lords), and the Mortmain and Charitable Uses Bill (House of Lords), being sent to the Commons on an early day, the Government will endeavour to pass those measures into law before the Easter Recess, so as to enable the Statute Law Committee to proceed with the publication of the Revised Edition of the Statutes?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): With the assistance of the House, the Government will be glad to see the Statute Law Revision Bill and the Mortmain and Charitable Uses Bill passed before Easter, so that the Revised Edition of the Statutes can be published with the least possible delay.

PUBLIC TRUSTEE BILL.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If, having regard to the fact that two Bills have been introduced for the appointment of a Public or Official Trustee, and that one or more Companies have been formed in anticipation of receiving legislative authority to undertake trusts and Executorships, Her Majesty's Government will consent to the second reading *pro formâ* of the Public Trustee Bill, and subsequently to refer the whole matter to a Select Committee?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The Government have no objection to the second reading, *pro formâ*, of the Public Trustee Bill, in order that it may be referred to a Select Committee; but the hon. Member must understand that the Government give no expression of approval of any part of the Bill.

TITHE RENT CHARGE—LEGISLATION.

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he can inform the House when the Bill relating to the levying of tithe, mentioned in the Gracious Speech from the Throne, will be introduced into Parliament; and, whether it will be introduced in this House or in "another place?"

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): It is hoped that the Bill will be introduced in the House of Lords before Easter.

THE METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS.

MR. FIRTH (Dundee) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, When he proposes to introduce the Bill for the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the past action of the Metropolitan Board of Works?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster), in reply, said, an Address had been presented to Her Majesty for the appointment of a Royal Commission on this subject, and Her Majesty had been advised to express her approval. Therefore, the Royal Commission would certainly be issued.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

In reply to Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne),

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, that the right hon. Gentleman would, of course, recognize the necessity of proceeding, in the first instance, with the Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill and the National Debt (Conversion) Bill, which would probably occupy Thursday. After that the Government proposed to take a stage of the Bill relating to the salary of the Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, which, after the repeated discussions that had taken place, ought not to take long. That would be followed by the Criminal Evidence Bill, and two or three other Bills of minor importance, including the Westminster Abbey Bill. If possible, also, the Speaker would be moved out of the Chair for Committee of Supply on the Civil Service Estimates on Thursday.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University): What will the Business for next week be?

MR. W. H. SMITH: If the state of Business will permit, we propose to rise for the Easter Recess after a Morning Sitting on Tuesday.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked, whether the Employers' Liability Act (1880) Amendment Bill would be proceeded with on Monday?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): The Financial Statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer will take precedence on Monday; and, therefore, I do not know whether it will be possible to bring on the Bill to which the hon. Member refers.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ENGLAND AND WALES)—POOR LAW GUARDIANS.

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.) asked, Whether it was the intention of the President of the Local Government Board to take any steps during the present Session to assimilate the property qualification of Poor Law Guardians with that of the new County Councils?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): We have no measure of that kind in contemplation.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—MR. P. O'BRIEN, M.P.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it was true that the Attorney General for Ireland refused, through Mr. Burke, Sessional Crown Solicitor for Roscommon, to consent to adjourn the hearing of the appeal of the hon. Member for North Monaghan against a sentence of four months with hard labour under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, from the 22nd to the 24th or 26th instant, on the grounds that such adjournment would inconvenience counsel for the Crown; and, whether he could now say that the hearing would be adjourned to allow the hon. Member to take part in the debate and Division on the Arrears Bill of the hon. Member for the City of Cork Mr Parnell)?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.), in reply, said, he had just received a telegram which he hoped would enable him to supplement the answer which he had prepared; but, unfortunately, it did not. As he understood the facts, it was not accurate to say that the Atterney General for Ireland had refused the application of the solicitor of the hon. Member for North Monaghan on the ground that such an adjournment would be inconvenient to the counsel for the Crown. The grounds on which the application was refused primarily and principally was that the Judge had himself fixed a long time ago to try criminal cases in the Athlone Division on the 27th, so that it was impossible to begin a trial, which would probably take two days, on the 26th. There was a second reason; but that second reason was not the inconvenience of the Crown counsel, but the public inconvenience that would arise either from a change of the counsel in the middle of the trial, or from removing the gentleman who was the Crown Counsel, as the adjournment would prevent him from attending certain very important murder cases to be tried in another county on the 27th. He, therefore, fully concurred in the course which the Attorney General for Ireland had taken; and he could not see how the Attorney General could have consented to the particular postponement that was required; but he had telegraphed over a suggestion that the trial should be postponed until Thursday afternoon, so as to give the hon. Gentleman the Member for North Monaghan the opportunity of voting on the Bill referred to, and of returning to Ireland in time for the trial on Thursday afternoon. He (Mr. A. J. Balfour) had expressed the hope to the Attorney General for Ireland that if such a course were possible he would communicate himself to the hon. Member by telegraph.

MOTIONS.

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION (FOREIGNERS).

NOMINATION OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Select Committee on Emigration and Immigration (Foreigners) do consist of Seventeen Members."—(*Captain Colomb.*)

MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.) complained that there was no Scotch Representative on the proposed Committee.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck) objected to the appointment of the Committee unless there were a Labour Representative upon it. He moved that the number should be 19.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "Seventeen," in order to insert the word "Nineteen."—(*Mr. Fenwick.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'Seventeen' stand part of the Question."

CAPTAIN COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.) pointed out that the number of Members constituting the Committee did not rest with the Mover of the Motion. If the hon. Member was dissatisfied he should confer with the Whips of his own Party.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby) said, he thought the demand of his hon. Friend was a most reasonable demand, which the Government should desire to meet.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster) said, so far as the Government were concerned, they had not the slightest objection to the proposal of the hon. Member.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the word 'Nineteen' be there inserted," put and *agreed to.*

Main Question, as amended, put.

Ordered, That the Select Committee on Emigration and Immigration (Foreigners) do consist of Nineteen Members.

Mr. SPEAKER intimated that Notice must be given of the two additional names of Members proposed to be added to the Committee.

The Committee was accordingly *nominated* of,—Mr. Bartley, Mr. Bradlaugh, Captain Colomb, Baron Henry De Worms, Mr. Fergusson, Dr. Fox, Mr. Heneage, Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth, Mr. William Lowther, Mr. Marriott, Mr. Montagu, Sir William Pearce, Baron de Rothschild, Mr. Seton-Karr, Mr. Samuel Smith, Mr. John Talbot, and Dr. Tanner, with power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.

PUBLIC WORSHIP FACILITIES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Salt, a Bill to provide Facilities for the performance of Public Worship, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Salt, Baron Dimsdale, Mr. Morrison, and Mr. Whitmore.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 183.]

PUBLIC HEALTH (PREVENTION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES, &C.) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Hastings, a Bill to amend "The Public Health Act, 1875," so as to make further provision for the prevention of Infectious Diseases; and for other purposes, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Hastings, Dr. Farquharson, Mr. Francis Powell, Mr. Wharton, and Mr. Hardcastle.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 184]

CLERKS OF THE PEACE BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Brunner, a Bill to amend the Law relating to Clerks of the Peace, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Brunner, Mr. Tatton Egerton, Captain Cotton, and Mr. Walter M'Laren.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 185.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

NATIONAL DEBT (CONVERSION) BILL.

(*Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Jackson.*)

[BILL 164.] COMMITTEE.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

PART I.

Conversion or Redemption of New Three per Cent Stock.

Clause 1 (Conversion of New Three per Cent Stock and redemption of dissentient stock holders).

Mr. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport) said, he had placed an Amendment on the Paper to insert, in the first line of page 2, after "Part I." the insertion of Clause 2 (Denomination or Incidents of New Stock); at the end thereof, to insert "Part II.(Conversion or Redemption of New Three per Cent Stock)," and insert Clause 1, making it Clause 2. Clause 1, which would then be Clause 2, page 2, lines 10 and 11, he proposed to amend by leaving out all after "amount of," and insert "the new Stock." He proposed to move the postponement of the clause, in order that these Amendments might be discussed, and he had to apologize to the Committee for moving Amendments which might, at first sight, appear to be simply matters of form; but he thought it would be seen that Clause 2 created new Stock which came under Section 1. He was of opinion that the powers relating to the creation of new Stock ought to come in the first part by themselves, and then the position in which every description of Stock stood would be seen at once. He hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would accept the Amendments, in order that the Bill might be drawn in a proper and logical way. There was, however, something further. The object of the Bill was to enable all the existing Stocks to be converted into new Stock. But the Bill did not provide for that, seeing that it made no provision for the conversion of any Consols or Reduced into new Stock, except such as was so converted immediately with the consent of the holders. It did not provide for notice to be given to those holders of Consols and Reduced who did not accept the offer of exchanging their present Stock for the new Stock at once, but preferred to wait until the expiration of the 12 months' notice that they were entitled to before making their election. He had understood that the object of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was to provide that these different descriptions of Stock should come to an end, and that there should be only one new champion Stock. He would therefore venture to move the first of his Amendments.

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin) pointed out that the proper course to take would be to move either that the clause be postponed or negatived.

MR. SYDNEY GEDGE asked, in the event of Clause 1 being negatived, what would be the best course to adopt?

THE CHAIRMAN said, the best course would be to move the postponement of the Clause.

MR. SYDNEY GEDGE accordingly did so.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be postponed."—(*Mr. Sydney Gedge.*)

MR. BARING (London) said, he thought the Amendment was entirely unnecessary, and he hoped the hon. Member would not press it.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square) said, he thought the view of the hon. Member behind him (Mr. Sydney Gedge) had been somewhat influenced by a misunderstanding of a portion of the entire scheme—namely, that it related to Consols and Reduced. He was sorry that he (Mr. Goschen) had so expressed himself on a former occasion as to leave any possibility of doubt upon the point. The Bill proposed to make the immediate conversion of the new Three per Cents compulsory, and that of Consols and of Reduced optional on the part of the holders. The question of notice, therefore, did not arise in regard to the latter. There was no compulsory conversion of Consols and Reduced. As a matter of fact, the Bill dealt practically in a compulsory form with regard to New Threes, but in a totally different form with Consols and Reduced. This explanation affected the other Amendments which the hon. Member put on the Paper. As far as the New Threes were concerned the Government had followed the precedent set by Mr. Goulburn in 1844, which established a compulsory conversion, but in regard to Consols and Reduced they had followed the precedent set in 1884 by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers). He hoped that in these circumstances the hon. Member would not think it necessary to press his Motion.

MR. SYDNEY GEDGE said, he was quite willing to withdraw the Motion.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby) said, he wished to put a question to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He did not know whether it arose on a general Amendment in regard to the names of the Stock, but he wished to understand what would be the exact position of the new Stock that was to be created, and whether or not existing Stocks would merge into it. Would the existing Two-and-a-Half or Two-and-Three-Quarters per Cents become one with the new Stock which was created by the Bill? Would the portions of the existing Stock, which might be converted optionally, become one Stock under the Bill? Would the operation of the Bill create one single Stock which would absorb all the old Stocks, the old Two-and-a-Half, the old Two-and-Three-Quarters, the new Two-and-a-Half, and the new Two-and-Three-Quarters, and so on.

MR. GOSCHEN said, that would not be the case. The new Stock would not absorb all the other Stocks, because no provision was made in the Bill for the conversion of the old existing Two-and-a-Half and Two-and-Three-Quarters per Cents. He thought, however, it would be well worthy of considering in the future, when this new Stock was once established, whether it was not desirable to offer terms to the holders of other Stocks. But he had been of opinion that it might embarrass the Bill if such a proposal had been contained in it, and therefore there was no provision of the kind. If there was a large conversion of Consols, they would be merged in the new Stock, and it would then be the duty of himself or any other Chancellor of the Exchequer to give notice to the outstanding portion of the holders of Consols, and endeavour either to pay them off, or to bring them within the purview of the new Stock. The Bill applied to the compulsory conversion of the New

Threes and to the optional conversion of Consols and Reduced.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT said, it was obviously inconvenient to have different descriptions of Stocks in the market, some of which would be of some amount. Judging from what the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had now stated, there would be some four or five public Stocks, some of them being of the same denomination, and yet separate and distinct Stocks.

MR. GOSCHEN said, it would be impossible to deal with the new Two-and-a-Half and the new Two-and-Three-Quarters Stock established by the right hon. Member for South Edinburgh without the consent of the holders; because they were not yet redeemable, and the Government could not yet apply any compulsory conversion to them. Any attempt to bring them under this scheme within the new Stock would have to be conducted on the voluntary principle of offering them terms. He would undertake to confer with those who might be able to advise with him on the subject with regard to terms. Various suggestions had come to him already from various quarters; but he could say nothing upon the matter until he knew what terms were likely to be accepted. No doubt it was inconvenient that the Bill should increase the number of Stocks by one; but it was only adding to an inconvenience which already existed, seeing that there were several kinds of Stock. If any inconvenience were experienced, he would endeavour to meet it; but he could not undertake to delay the present Bill until some conclusion had been arrived at.

MR. SYDNEY GEDGE said, he had got his idea of the meaning of the Bill not so much from the Bill itself as from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman in introducing it. As he misunderstood the object of the right hon. Gentleman he would not press the Amendment.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. SYDNEY GEDGE moved an Amendment to sub-section 1 of Clause 1, to provide that the holders of the New Three per Cent Stock who do not signify dissent by the specified date, shall afterwards receive in lieu of the amount of New Three per Cents an equal nominal amount of new Stock—

"And the reception of that amount of New Stock shall not be considered to be a change or variation of investment by the holder."

He trusted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would accept that Amendment, or otherwise great difficulties would be imposed upon persons who were in the position of trustees, and who had no power of making a change of investment, or who were disinclined to consent to a change.

Amendment proposed,

In page 2, line 12, after the word "Stock," to add the words "And the reception of that amount of New Stock shall not be considered to be a change or variation of investment by the holder."—(*Mr. Sydney Gedge.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth) suggested that there should be an interpretation clause to provide that the new Stock should be distinctly called new Consols. He would suggest the insertion of words to that effect.

THE CHAIRMAN pointed out that an Amendment of that kind would not apply to the present Clause, but to Clause 2, Sub-section (4).

MR. KIMBER said, that in Part I., Sub-section (1), the following words occurred:—"In this Act referred to as new Stock." He proposed to substitute for those words "new Consols."

THE CHAIRMAN said, if the hon. Member would look at Clause 2, Sub-section (4), he would see that it referred back to those words "new Stock."

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the effect of the Amendment would be, as he understood the right hon. Gentleman to accept the words proposed.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight) explained that if the Amendment was accepted, it would provide that the holders of New Three per Cents who did not dissent would afterwards receive an equal amount of new Stock, which would be subjected to the same conditions as the old Stock.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Words *added*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

MR. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel) said, he wished to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he could not extend the clause, so as to include another portion of the National Debt, not a very large portion, but which, if brought within the scheme, would effect a saving of about £26,000 per annum to England. He referred to the Four per Cent Guaranteed Turkish Stock, originally £5,000,000, of which nearly £4,000,000 were still outstanding. There might be political considerations involved in the question, as the Stock was guaranteed jointly by England and France; but he thought that the ingenuity of the Chancellor of the Exchequer might overcome the difficulty, and that the Stock might be called in and divided between the two Governments. The interest now paid upon this Stock seemed to him to be an extraordinary interest to pay on Government security. By calling in the bonds France would save £7,000 per annum and England £26,000. In line 11 of the present clause the Government took power to give for New Three per Cent Stock an equivalent amount of the Stock to be created. He would suggest that the Government should take power to give £104 of New Two-and-a-Half per Cent Stock, so as to create a fairly permanent Stock with an unchanging income. In his opinion, the Government ought to take power to give a sufficient amount of Two-and-a-Half per Cents that would yield £2 12*s.* per cent, the same as the new and varying Stock would yield. The Two-and-a-Half per Cent Stock was really the Stock of the future, in which the Three per Cents would eventually be merged, and therefore the popularity of that Stock ought to be maintained, and, if possible, increased, and its market ought to be widened. Certainly 2½ per cent was a more convenient interest than 2¾ per cent. There was no Stock paying 2¾ per cent outside the United Kingdom. In the case of Holland, the Two-and-a-Half per Cents were a much more favourite Stock. It was even in more favour than the Three per Cent or the Three-and-a-Half per Cent Stock, where there was no fear of redemption, and so far as Two and Three-Quarters were concerned, they bore, as regards interest, a complex relation to all other Stocks. Two-and-a-half per cent was exactly one half of 5. No doubt it was quite possible, when they were dealing with fractional interests, to add one-tenth and convert Two-and-a-Half into Two and Three-Quarters; but Two and Three-Quarters was a Stock which never had a good market. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in introducing the Bill, told the House that the banking community preferred a Stock at 2½ per cent to one at 2¾. He quite agreed with that statement, and he also believed that options would tend to confuse the public mind. In some cases it would be difficult to invest in the new Stock, especially when it became necessary to settle annuities. He believed that the public would prefer Stock with a fixed yield for 35 years, and many persons in England and abroad would prefer to invest in the New Two-and-a-Half Stock, under par, than to invest in Stock which was over par, seeing that they would have to sacrifice a certain portion of the capital for the benefit of those who had a life interest in the security. He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would promise to provide some means of amalgamating the present Stocks, and he was quite sure that 2½ per cent, at very nearly par, would constitute a real champion Stock. He had no wish to criticize the scheme of the Government unfavourably; on the contrary, he thought the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in regard to the New Three per Cents were very reasonable.

THE CHAIRMAN said, he must point out that the hon. Member was making a speech which would have been much more appropriately delivered on the second reading of the Bill.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause 2 (Denominations and incidents of new Stock).

SIR GEORGE BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale), in moving, as an Amendment, in page 3, line 12, after "called," to leave out to "stock," in line 15, and to insert—

> "Consolidated Two and Three-Quarter Pounds per Cent Annuities, until the fifth day of April, one thousand nine hundred and three, and thereafter shall be called Consolidated Two-and-a-Half Pounds per Cent Annuities;"

said, he believed that a great majority were in favour of this small modification.

Among the many practical reasons he would only mention three. It would prevent the new Stock being confused with the Two and Three-Quarter per Cent Stock created by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh; it would obviate a change in title in 15 years; and it would give the new Stock a right to the time-honoured title of "Consols."

Amendment proposed,

In page 3, line 12, after "called," to leave out to "stock," in line 15, and insert the words "Consolidated Two and Three-Quarter Pounds per Cent Annuities, until the fifth day of April, one thousand nine hundred and three, and thereafter shall be called Consolidated Two-and-a-Half Pounds per Cent Annuities." — (*Sir George Baden-Powell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square) said, there was no very great difference between the two titles; but he was bound to say he thought the name which the hon. Member proposed to give was even more awkward than the name contained in the Bill. "Two and Three-Quarter Pounds per Cent Annuities" did not seem a very simple title for that Stock. As it stood in the Bill it was called "Consolidated Stock," and that Consolidated Stock would, he hoped, carry with it, after a large conversion had taken place, the ordinary appellation of Consols. He had consulted some of the very highest authorities in the commercial world in regard to the name, and he was given to understand that they would view with regret any change in the title it was proposed to give. No doubt it was a simple point; but, as a matter of fact, nearly all the Notices which had been issued in connection with the Conversion Scheme had gone out with the name that appeared in the Bill, and unless some strong reason were shown for it he should be sorry to see it changed.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth) said, that after the remarks which had been made by the right hon. Gentleman, he did not suppose that the Amendment would be pressed; but it did appear to him that the Bill should give to the Stock the title which it would eventually receive. The name contained in the clause, "Two and Three-Quarter Pounds per Cent Annuities," might be simple, but it was inaccurate in fact, and he was afraid it would not be clearly understood by a large portion of the public who were interested in the matter. At the expiration of 20 years the new Stock was to be entitled only to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, and to call it "Two and Three-Quarters Stock" would give a misleading description to the public who desired to invest in it. As the hon. Member opposite had pointed out, it would present to the public a depreciated idea of what the credit of the country was worth, because it would appear that the market quotation was the price of a Stock carrying interest at $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent throughout; whereas it was liable to be reduced to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. He had himself to move an Amendment to provide that the new Stock should be called "New Consols;" but after what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, he would refrain from doing so. He was, however, of opinion that that description would have covered any variation, and would not have misled anybody.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University) said, that the name by which the Stock would be known in the market would not depend so much on the wording of the clause, as whether Consols were largely converted or not. Under these circumstances, he trusted that his hon. Friend would not press the Amendment.

SIR GEORGE BADEN-POWELL said, he was ready to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, before the Committee parted with the clause, to explain what was proposed to be done with the small amount of Three-and-a-Half per Cent Stock, to which no reference had been made.

MR. GOSCHEN said, he fully recognized the duty which devolved upon the Government in endeavouring to bring all these Stocks into one; but it would be impossible to deal in the present Bill either with the Four per Cent Stock or the Turkish Guarantee Stock. That Stock must claim attention at the proper time; but before it could be dealt with it would be necessary to take steps for consulting the French Government.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause 3 (Mode of signifying dissent).

Mr. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport), in moving, as an Amendment, to leave out Sub-section (3), which provides—

> "That the transfer of any stock to which a dissent relates shall be subject to the prescribed conditions, and shall be entered in the books of the Bank under the same number as was fixed for the stock when the dissent was so signified,"

said, his reason for moving the omission of the sub-section was that they were dealing with the stockholders who dissented to the conversion, and would be paid off at such times as suited the convenience of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. What might happen was this—it was quite possible that the holders might not be paid off until the 1st of August next year, and the fact that they were liable to be paid off would place them in an embarrassing position, seeing that they would have to hold Stock that was liable to be paid off. It appeared to him that the holders of such Stock ought not to be interfered with in regard to their right of dealing with it. A man might hold £100,000 worth of Stock and might desire to sell it bit by bit; but if he (Mr. Gedge) read the clause aright, there could only be one transfer of that Stock, and it was not to be dealt with unconditionally, but subjected to some conditions to be drawn up by the Treasury. The sub-section would, therefore, hamper the holders of Stock, and he submitted that the Government must either pay off the public creditor or leave him his rights until he was paid off. It would be unfair and inconvenient to the holders of Stock, who chose to be paid off and not accept the conversion, that they should remain until it suited the pleasure of the Government to pay them off hampered with restricted provisions.

Amendment proposed, in page 3, to leave out Sub-section (3).—(*Mr. Sydney Gedge.*)

Question proposed, "That Sub-section (3) stand part of the Clause."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Richard Webster) (Isle of Wight) said, that if the hon. Member would consult the Scheme of 1844 he would find that exactly the same provision as this was made, and that it did no harm to the holders of Stock. There were certain well-known rules applicable to the holders of Stock at the present time, and it was considered desirable, in dealing with the matter, that the holders should have no capricious right to break up the amount of Stock they held. The Government considered it necessary to follow the precedent of 1844, and he hoped the Committee would support them in that view.

Mr. SYDNEY GEDGE said, he had either shown a grievance or he had not done so. If he had shown a grievance, a mere reference to a precedent set 45 years ago did not cure it, and he considered that the grievance itself ought to be remedied.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square) pointed out that the holder of Stock could sell his Stock before he accepted the scheme of the Government, and by that means the whole difficulty would be avoided. Much inconvenience would arise if the Stock held by dissentients was liable to be split up into a number of fractions. If there were dissentients, he would endeavour to meet their case by paying them off in full at the earliest possible moment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 4 (Time for signifying dissent in case of persons abroad) *agreed to.*

Clause 5 (Dissent by executors, trustees, &c.)

Mr. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport) said, he was sorry to be so frequently on his legs; but he had been in communication with many persons in regard to this Bill, and he was endeavouring to attain some of their objects. The next Amendment he had to move was to insert in page 4, line 18, after the word "Stock," "or any Consolidated Three per Cent Stock or any Reduced Three per Cent Stock." He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would accept that Amendment. He did not see why the New Threes provided for in the clause should not have the same provisions extended to them as other Stock. Unfortunately, in the Bill, as it stood, all kind of Stock had been dealt with in a confused manner. The whole Bill was full of bad drafting, and it required amendment in various parts.

Amendment proposed,

In page 4, line 18, after the word "Stock" insert "or any Consolidated Three per Cent Stock or any Reduced Three per Cent Stock."—(*Mr. Sydney Gedge.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square) said, that the hon. Member was again pursuing what he might call the same erroneous hypothesis which had induced him to put his first Amendment on the Paper. The hon. Member said the Bill was badly drafted; but it appeared that it was badly drafted only in the view that it intended to do something which it did not intend to do. Considering that the Bill dealt with a very complicated subject, he thought that it was extremely well drafted, and extremely well arranged. The hon. Member himself complained of the omission from Part II. of Part I. The plan laid down was that the two Stocks, in order to avoid confusion, should be dealt with in two separate Parts. For that reason he could not accept the Amendment, which was contrary to the general construction of the Act.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Clause put, and *agreed to.*

Clause 6 (Funds in Court).

Amendment proposed, in page 4, line 26, after the word "name," to insert the words "or in the books."

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

MR. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport), in moving, as an Amendment, to omit Sub-section (2), which relates to the application of the High Courts and the Court of Session, said, his reason for moving the Amendment was that the application might be necessary, not only with regard to Part I. of the Bill, but also with regard to Part II. As a matter of fact the sub-section clearly referred to the whole Bill, and not to this part of it merely, and he urged that it should be omitted and re-enacted with another sub-section as a whole in another part of the Bill—namely, Part IV.

Amendment proposed, to leave out Sub-section (2).—(*Mr. Sydney Gedge.*)

Question proposed, "That Sub-section (2) stand part of the clause."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight) said, the Government could not accept the Amendment. The hon. Member had referred to the drafting of the Bill. Nobody would suggest that a lawyer might not have drawn it in a better form if there were only one mind brought to bear upon it; but one of the objects the Government had in view was so to draft the measure that laymen as well as lawyers should be able to feel their way about and fully understand what they were doing. The object had been to make the Bill as easily understood as possible. It was, therefore, important to follow the language of precedents. As to the Amendment, it was thought desirable that the scheme in this particular part of the Bill should be completed, and the sub-section, therefore, was necessary.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 7 (Stock held by official trustees of charitable funds).

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 7, to leave out "may" and insert "shall."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight) said, the Government had no objection to the Amendment.

Amendment *agreed to;* word *substituted.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

PART II.

POWER TO EXCHANGE CONSOLIDATED AND REDUCED THREE PER CENTS FOR NEW STOCK.

Clause 8 (Exchange of Consols and Reduced for new Stock) *agreed to.*

Clause 9 (Power of Court, trustees, &c, in relation to exchange of Stock).

On the Motion of Mr. CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER, Amendment made, in line 2, after "name" insert "or in the books."

Amendment proposed,

In page 6, line 9, to leave out "The Treasury with the approval" and insert "the Lord Chancellor."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Question proposed, "That the words, 'the Treasury with the approval' stand part of the clause."

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.) asked, if it was intended to give the Lord Chancellor power of making the regulations without the concurrence of the Treasury?

MR. GOSCHEN said, the only object of the Amendment was to transpose the order, and to provide that the Lord Chancellor should make the regulations with the approval of the Treasury, instead of the Treasury making them with the approval of the Lord Chancellor.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the words 'the Lord Chancellor' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

On the Motion of Mr. CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER, the following Amendment made:—

In Page 6, line 9, to leave out from "England" to "Scotland of" in line 10, both inclusive, and insert "Stock standing in the name of Her Majesty's Paymaster General."

On the Motion of Mr. CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER, the following Amendments made:—In page 6, line 11, to leave out—"and in the case of Ireland of," and insert—

"In the case of Stock standing in the name of the Accountant to the Court of Session";

in line 11, after "Lord Chancellor of Ireland," leave out "May," and insert—

"In the case of Stock standing in the name of the Accountant General of the Supreme Court of Judicature in Ireland, may, with the approval in each case of the Treasury";

and in line 12, after "stock," insert "or any part thereof."

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) said, the Amendment next, which stood in his name, was purely a matter of drafting. He proposed to leave out the words from "payable" to "or," in line 15; and afterwards to insert the exact wording from the Clause which Lord Herschell had settled. He did not wish to press the Amendment if the Government were unwilling to accept it.

Amendment proposed,

In page 6, line 14, to leave out the words "Which consent any trustee or other person acting in a fiduciary character, is hereby authorized to give."—(*Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight) said, he entirely appreciated the intention of the right hon. Gentleman in moving the Amendment. The Government had, however, considered it, and were of opinion that the present wording which carried out their intention should be retained.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

On the Motion of Mr. CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER, the following Amendment made:—

In page 6, line 22, at end, insert—"Provision may be made by such regulations that either generally or in specified classes of cases, the Lord Chancellor, the Secretary for Scotland, or the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, as the case may be, may on behalf of the persons interested in any such stock as aforesaid, consent to the exchange thereof, unless dissent from such exchange is signified within the time and in the manner fixed by the regulations."

On the Motion of Mr. SYDNEY GEDGE, the following Amendments made:—In page 6, line 26, leave out "may" and insert "shall"; and in same line leave out "or with the consent."

Amendment proposed,

In page 6, to leave out Sub-section (3) and insert—"An Exchange of Consolidated Three per Cent Stock, or of Reduced Three per Cent Stock for New Stock, made in pursuance of this Act, shall not be considered to be a change or variation of investment by the holder."—(*Mr. Sydney Gedge.*)

Question proposed, "That Sub-section (3) stand part of the Clause."

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright) said, he should like to point out that some provision was necessary in the case of trustees who held Consols, the interest of which was shared by many persons, say, in Australia, Canada, India, and other parts of the world. It was necessary that there should be some protection for trustees so placed, and as they could not be too clear in a matter of this kind, unless some distinct reason were given for the withdrawal of this Sub-section, he should himself move an Amendment.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER said, the hon. Gentleman's point had been answered by his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. A clause would be introduced to the effect that trustees who accepted conversion should not be held to have made a new investment.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the words proposed be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 10 (Provision of funds for facilitating conversion).

Amendment proposed, in page 7, line 14, after the word "make" to insert "in the prescribed manner and at the prescribed time."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) said, that having addressed the House fully on the subject of his Amendment last Friday, he should not trouble the Committee at length now. He had no desire to assume a tone of which the Chancellor of the Exchequer might complain, but desired to deal with the question purely as one of principle. He said that the optional conversion of Stock should rest entirely on its own merits, and that nothing ought to be paid to bankers or agents to induce any person to agree to the terms offered by the Government. The principle of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was that it was the interest of the holder of Consols to accept the Reduced Stock, and of course it was to the interest of the State that the conversion should take place; and that principle had always been advocated and carried out in previous conversions. If, then, it was to the interest of the stockholder to accept the Chancellor of the Exchequer's terms, why was it necessary to pay a brokerage for obtaining his concurrence in this conversion. The hon. Baronet the Member for the London University (Sir John Lubbock) on Friday had taken exception to what he (Mr. Fowler) had then said with reference to the London bankers, and the view of the hon. Baronet was endorsed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. With all respect to them he did not think there was anything offensive to bankers or agents in saying that no person should be placed in a position in which his interest might conflict with his duty. If the banker was in the position of an agent giving advice, then he thought he was put in a false position and that he had no right to complain if his position were severely scrutinized. They knew that if an agent of a vendor received a commission from the purchaser, he had to account for that commission, because the law did not consider he should be an agent of both the parties to the bargain. This commission was only given in the event of the advice given by the banker or other agent being favourable to conversion. He would like to call attention to the Money Article which appeared in *The Standard* newspaper of the 18th of January, which, referring to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's New Local Loan Stock, said—

> "That the market did not understand the terms of the conversion, that the Treasury with its shortsighted stinginess offered the brokers no remuneration for any work they might do in getting their clients to convert their Stock; and that no conversion of Stocks would ever pass which did not in this way enlist the self interest of the market."

That was the whole of his argument on this part of the case; he rested upon that, and he said they ought not to sanction anything which would enlist the self interest of the Money Market. Their object and duty as Members of the House of Commons was simply to protect the public interests. He was aware that the Chancellor of the Exchequer on Friday repudiated this notion of commission, and he (Mr. Fowler) was not surprised that he did so. He alleged that it was not payment for advice to induce people to assent to terms, but as payment for services rendered by bankers and brokers. Now, he very much doubted the extent of the labour to which the Chancellor of the Exchequer referred; he did not see what work there was to be done, and besides, the service, if any, was purely voluntary. The Bank of England had provided a very simple form which anyone of ordinary education could easily fill up. No one had asked the bankers to render their services, and he had no doubt that the hon. Baronet the Member for the London University was familiar with the circular which had been issued by a large number of London bankers, which stated that it was the intention of the Government to pay off those holders of Stock who did not send in their assents at par as Parliament had directed, which by the way was incorrect, for Parliament had not yet made any such direction. The circular was to the effect that it was generally thought desirable to accept the terms of conversion, the interest at work in favour of the scheme being considered so great as to insure its success. He found no fault with the banks for sending that circular; he found no fault with the phraseology of the circular; but he said it was a voluntary service, and that they had, therefore, no right to come on the public funds, and ask to be remunerated for what they had done. But if it were for services rendered in aid of conversion, why should not everybody who converts Stock have this 1*s.* 6*d.* per cent paid to them? Why should bankers and brokers alone receive it? If the large holders were to have it, why were not the small men who conducted the whole matter for themselves? If that were so then he thought that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's contention would be logically sound. If the right hon. Gentleman said that some expense was necessarily incurred in filling up these forms, and if he would say that every stockholder should be entitled to this commission, then he thought it would very much weaken the strength of the objection which many hon. Members felt to this provision. It would then be a fair and arguable contention that the allowance was being made to the holders for the expense to which they were to be put. What he did ask the Committee not to assent to, was this payment to bankers and agents now proposed for the first time for obtaining assent from holders for the conversion of Stock, which, however it might be expressed, was nothing else than a payment to the banker or broker for getting people to accept these terms.

Amendment proposed, in page 7, line 18, to leave out from the word "exchange," to the end of the Clause.—(*Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

Question proposed, "That the words, 'and may also, if they think fit, authorize the Bank to pay in respect of Stock so surrendered an allowance,' stand part of the Clause."

Mr. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport) said, he had given Notice of a similar Amendment, in order that at the end of the Bill a clause might be inserted which would fix a commission for the conversion of the New Threes also. It seemed to him that they were giving a commission of 1*s.* 6*d.* merely to induce people to waive the year's notice. Those who supported the clause might be open to the comments of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton; but the real reason for this provision had been given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on Friday last, when he pointed out that this 1*s.* 6*d.* was not paid practically to the broker or recognized agent, but really to the stockholders to cover the expense they were put to. He had since that time received letters from ladies as to whether they should be paid off, or whether they should accept the conversion. For his own part, if he received 1*s.* 6*d.* per £100 Stock, he should not charge his client with the expense he was put to, and he was interested in very large Trusts, and had considerable correspondence with regard to them. But the trouble was very much the same with regard to the New Threes as to the other Stocks. He entirely agreed with the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) with regard to secret commission to bribe agents to act unfairly between clients; such things were abominable. The right hon. Gentleman, being himself a practising solicitor, knew that under the Solicitors' Act, a solicitor receives a brokerage fee even from the borrower for whom he did not act, and he also gets a fee for investigating the title. But that was openly done, and there was no corruption about it; and it was well known that every solicitor made a part of his income by commissions of that kind. He should hope no one would believe that a solicitor was bribed by receiving that commission to advise a loan contrary to the interests of his clients. With regard to the present payment of 1*s.* 6*d.*, he thought that it should be universal; and, therefore, that the matter should be so put that they might decide the question as to whether its application should be universal or limited.

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK (London University) said, he understood the hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Sydney Gedge) proposed to support the omission of these words in order that, by a subsequent Amendment, the 1*s.* 6*d.* should be given in the case of the New Threes as well as Consols. He (Sir John Lubbock) thought, however, that the hon. Gentleman had himself given the reason why the Chancellor of the Exchequer excluded the New Threes. In the case of the Three per Cent Consols and Reduced Threes, assent was necessary, which involved a good deal of trouble, and which was not so in the case of the New Threes; and that seemed to him (Sir John Lubbock) to place the latter in an entirely different position from the two former classes. He agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) that the optional conversion should act upon its own merits; but then he went on to observe that the bankers were placed in a false position unless the result was favourable. He would, however, point out, on the other hand, that this resembled all Stock Exchange business, for there also, if nothing was done, there was no commission. The right hon. Gentleman had said that the London bankers were themselves very large holders of Stock, and surely if they were going to convert their own Stock, there could be no objection to their recommending their friends to adopt the same course as they were themselves taking. It remained to be seen what that course would be, because until the Bill became law, he took it that the matter would remain open. But the right hon. Gentleman asked why the bankers were taking a different course now from that which they took in the case of the conversion scheme of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers). The answer was that the circumstances were different, and they now thought it wise to convert, and therefore they suggested to their friends to look into the matter; whereas, in the former case, they did not think it wise themselves to convert, and consequently did not think it proper to recommend their friends to do so. What bankers did themselves they naturally recommended to their customers. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh was so enamoured of his plan that he seemed to think that bankers were mistaken in the advice they gave. He could only account for it by replying to inquiries made to him that "bankers were not infallible;" but he (Sir John Lubbock) would point out that the result on the market had justified the advice they gave on a former occasion. The right hon. Gentleman had evidently forgotten the facts. He offered the Two-and-a-Half per Cent Stock at 92, and he complained that bankers told their customers they would get better terms by waiting. But he forgot that in 1885 the Two-and-a-Halfs which he offered at 92 fell to 84, so that those who wanted to do so had the opportunity of purchasing at 8 per cent less than at the time. He (Sir John Lubbock) admitted that was a temporary fall, and that it occurred during the war scare; but everyone knew that they stood for some time at 88 and 89, or 4 per cent below the price the Rt. Hon. Gentleman offered, and thus, although there was no corresponding fall in Consols, the result justified the advice given. It was true they had risen subsequently, in common with other Securities. But now the case was very different, and bankers were no doubt under the impression that holders of Stock would be wise to accept the terms offered. He thought it was a little unfair to expect that any banker would be influenced by this very small commission of 1*s.* 6*d.*, seeing that they were only advising their customers to take the course they were themselves adopting in reference to their own affairs. Unless the House agreed to the course proposed by the Government, it would be very difficult for trustees to convert, because there was no fund under their control from which they could pay the expense of doing so.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby) said, this was really a proposal made for the first time by the British Government to pay a commission for getting something done on the Stock Exchange which would not be done otherwise. His right hon. Friend (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) had asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer the other night what precedent there was for this course, and the right hon. Gentleman, being pressed very much by that challenge, suggested the case of the Suez Canal. He (Sir William Harcourt) was surprised that the Chancellor of the Exchequer accepted that precedent; because if ever there was a precedent that ought to be avoided it should be that. It was now objected that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was going to the Stock Exchange, and saying—"We make it worth your while to give us your support." But in the case of the Suez Canal there was the payment of so much for the accommodation of advancing the money required. He had heard it stated, notwithstanding, that the Government might have had that money for one-quarter of what they paid for it; and if that was so, a worse precedent was never set than that of the Government going into the market and paying a premium for money at a higher rate than they would have had to pay to the Bank of England. For the first time the Chancellor of the Exchequer offered a premium to the Stock Exchange for getting his proposal accepted. He would not ask whether it was large or small; how much or how little it was, mattered not; but the fact remained that they were asked to set up this fatal example, which might in future be extended under very objectionable circumstances. Hitherto the British Government had been entirely free from anything of this description. He made no insinuation at all; but they knew perfectly well that certain language had been used during the last month, and it was that language that made it necessary that they should be extremely cautious on a subject of this kind. No one could have listened to the preliminary conversation before the proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was made, without hearing that it was of no use to make this proposal unless the right hon. Gentleman "greased the hands of the stockbrokers." He did not suggest that that was the object of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but it showed the danger of proposals of the kind with a view to what might happen in the future. His hon. Friend the Member for the London University (Sir John Lubbock) had not answered the question put by his right hon. Friend the Member for East Wolverhampton—namely, what was going to be done with reference to the large Stocks held by the bankers themselves? Was that money to be paid to the bankers and insurance companies for converting their own Stock? Those were things which made the House properly jealous of the introduction of new precedents. The amount in question was small; but the precedent was not so; and he should like to hear from the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether this payment was to be made to the bankers and those who themselves held large amounts of Stock. He would also like his hon. Friend the Member for the London University to understand exactly the point of the objection taken, which was not as to the magnitude of the sum of money to be paid, but to the precedent set up by the Treasury, paying to bankers for the first time what was a commission on a transaction in which they were engaged as agents.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square) said, he was not surprised at the course taken by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler), but his complaint was against the tone of the remarks which he made the other day. He agreed that there was some force in the objections which had been taken. He had not quoted the precedent of the Suez Canal as a justification of their proceeding, but had referred to it in contradiction of the statement of the right hon. Gentleman that there was no precedent of a commission being paid by the British Government. He did not think it fair to say that this was the first time that a commission had been paid by the British Government. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) had said that the case of the Suez Canal was totally different, not only in point of commission but in respect of circumstances. He did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that the Indian Government last year conducted a very successful operation for the conversion of £60,000,000 from 4 per cent to 3½ per cent, and that it paid a commission of 4 per cent. It might be said that that was not the British Government, but it formed an extremely close parallel to that which was taking place at the present moment. He was glad that the right hon. Gentleman did not complain of the amount of the commission; but he had one word to say on that point—namely, that the ordinary brokerage on Consols was 2*s.* 6*d.* per cent, whereas this commission was only 1*s.* 6*d.* per cent. He called the attention of the Committee to this fact, that by this payment they secured to the holders, who had to employ bankers, solicitors and brokers, that they should have their work done for them much more cheaply than would have been otherwise the case in the ordinary course of business. This commission was to be paid, because it was presumed that there were few bankers who would charge more to their clients than that which was devoted to this purpose by the House of Commons. The right hon. Gentleman called attention to the fact that he was not aware that there would be much trouble connected with the business, but he (Mr. Goschen) was informed that there was a very considerable trouble.

Bankers were obliged to consider the interests of their clients, and he was told that persons residing abroad had immediately to be informed by their bankers of what was going on with reference to the Funds, and that was an operation which they had under all circumstances to perform for the interests of their clients. There could be no doubt therefore that the trouble connected with the conversion scheme was very considerable. The right hon. Gentleman had asked him whether those persons who took their Stock to the Bank of England would receive any commission. He presumed that no commission would be paid to them, because they were not agents, and the same remark applied to the case of Insurance Companies. The commission was a brokerage to pay expenses to free holders from the charges which they would otherwise incur. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby had spoken of "greasing the hands of the Stock Exchange." Considering that solicitors and bankers in the country and others would participate in this payment, he did not think it worth while to say that the Stock Exchange would be gained over by an amount charged really lower than the amount of commission generally paid on Consols.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian) said, he was reluctant to offer any opposition to any enactment of this Bill; but he must confess that he did not think that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made out any case for the proposal now before the Committee. In the first place, with regard to precedent, the question of precedent was altogether out of the way. There was no precedent in the case at all. The Indian precedent was no more a precedent than if it were a proceeding of the French or Spanish Government, because it was not a Parliamentary precedent. It was quite obvious also that the case of the Suez Canal was absolutely no precedent at all, because the payment in that case, however unwarrantable it was—and he thought it most unwarrantable — was a payment for services rendered to us, and not for services rendered by bankers and agents to other people. Secondly, it stood upon a totally different ground, and taken upon its merits, he did not think anyone would insist that it was necessary to pay any commission at all. Therefore, precedent disappeared altogether. He did not think that it was unfair to say that the fact of this being an entirely new proposal was that which constituted an objection to it. He did not say it was a fatal objection, but the absence of precedent undoubtedly afforded an unfavourable presumption. Then, as to the form of the proposal, was it an awkward and unmanageable form? The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that if a banker, being a large holder of Stock himself, transacted the exchange at the Bank, he would receive no commission. But what would be the consequence? It would be that the banker would employ a broker, and the commission would be divided. That was not a desirable arrangement to make by Act of Parliament. Again, take the case of the small holder who transacted his own business. He would have all the trouble and probably rather more trouble than would fall on the banker or broker. Why was that small holder, who was the person really interested and who transacted his own business, not to have that allowance for his trouble which would be paid to an agent? No answer had been given to the question, and he doubted whether any answer could be given to it. But, taking a broader view of the question, he thought that if payment was to be made at all this was not an extravagant payment. He took objection to the ground of payment, and it was that which, in his opinion, was a mistake. He could not agree with the Chancellor of the Exchequer's argument advanced in illustration of the smallness of the payment—namely, that it was less than an individual would pay in order to have a transfer effected, because, in the case of a transfer, he had alienated his property. In this case he was doing nothing of the kind; he was not a moving party in the case, and the operation performed for him was not alienation, but a simple change of form. Therefore, he considered there was no analogy between the two cases. But it seemed to him to be a mistake altogether to introduce the recognized agent into this transaction, because the question arose whose agent was he? Let them pay their own agent, but do not let them pay the agents of other people. If the money was to be paid at all, he ventured to say that it ought to be paid to the principal and not to the agent.

He was not saying that the 1*s.* 6*d.* was too much for the service to be performed; but it was to be performed for the customer, who was the principal. If the agent advised the exchange, it was for the customer and not for the public interest that the advice was given. He was not like Members of that House who sat there to make the best arrangement they could for the public interest; he worked in the interest of his principal, and the service done was a matter between his principal and himself. He thought, then, having regard to the basis on which this arrangement ought to be founded, that they were paying the wrong man. They agreed that those in the position which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had described should be paid the value of his services in money, but, without saying that the amount was too much or too little, he said that it was not for the State to pay the agent.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.) said, he confessed that when the matter first came before him he did not at all like the idea of this commission. He was certain, with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler), that the course was without precedent, and he was equally certain that Parliamentary sanction of such a course might form an evil precedent for the future. But he did not quite follow the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), though he felt it was almost presumptuous on his part even to hint a difference of opinion with him; and if he differed from the right hon. Gentleman it was because of his intellectual incapacity to rise to the same height to which he habitually soared. Why did the right hon. Gentleman argue that a person assisting in the conversion of the National Debt from 3 per cent to $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent Stock was not rendering a service to the State? That he could not follow. The right hon. Gentleman would surely agree that the conversion of the Debt, if it could be legitimately effected, was a great public object from which the State, as a whole, derived considerable benefit; and, therefore, if in effecting that conversion a great financial organization and great financial machinery was set in motion, it was difficult to argue that no service was thereby rendered to the State. If he had any objection, to this proposal at all, his objection would be founded upon grounds of public economy. The conversion was a great public object. Could it be obtained without paying money in this way? That seemed to him to be the point. There was no doubt of this, that if the commission were a very much larger one than that in the Bill, it would not be assented to by Parliament. If the commission had been at all open to the charge of being excessive, Parliament would not have assented to it. If that was admitted it threw a considerable amount of suspicion upon the merits of the commission altogether. They were told that the commission was a small one. He could not altogether agree that a financial charge of £250,000 was a small charge. That £250,000 must come, he supposed, out of the revenues of this year or the next, and he objected most strongly to paying one sixpence for the conversion of the National Debt, in the shape of commission, unless it could be proved by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the House of Commons that he could not effect the conversion without it. That was a point which the right hon. Gentleman had not got rid of. Could he get up and prove to the House that, without this payment, his conversion scheme would not have any chance of success? He could not see that the right hon. Gentleman could alter what had passed, because they were told by bankers and by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the Consol holder was placing himself in an advantageous position by converting. If that was so, and if what was widely asserted in the Press, that all Consol holders were in a frame of mind eager, at any rate willing, to convert, was true, why should they sanction a payment which might amount to £250,000, and might amount to a good deal more, when they might perfectly well attain their object without paying a sixpence? That was a point of view which nobody had yet touched upon. The commission, he thought, might be objected to on other grounds. He sympathized very much indeed with what had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler), and, to a great extent, with what had been said by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) as regarded what he would call rather the bitter and unsavoury taste of these commissions to the Stock Exchange. He did not like it at all; but if the Government stated and proved that the great object of the conversion could not be attained without a payment of this kind, then the House must consider was the amount excessive? If it was agreed that if the amount was not excessive, and that the payment was absolutely necessary for the success of the scheme, he owned, though he did not like it, he should not be able to vote against the proposal of the Government.

MR. HALDANE (Haddington) said, the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) had just laid down one of the most extraordinary doctrines he (Mr. Haldane) had ever heard. The noble Lord had said, in effect, that it was legitimate to bribe, because the party in whose interest they proposed to bribe was the State. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] What the noble Lord said came to that. It was an assertion that the end justified the means. But he was not going to discuss that point, because he thought the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) said enough to lay the foundation for another objection to this clause which he wished to point out. He did not think the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had considered the question whether this clause would really protect him in the transaction which he proposed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer must remember that it had often been said, rightly or wrongly, that the morality of the Courts was higher than the morality of commerce. There were many things done in commerce every day which would not stand when they came to be tested, and when they were entering upon transactions of enormous magnitude like this, it was necessary they should take care they did not get themselves into an invidious or awkward position which would not bear the light of day. In the light in which the Courts regarded these transactions, if they made a payment, however innocently, to an agent, one of two things might happen. The agent's principal might say, "I affirm this transaction; I take the benefit of it;" or he might say, "I set aside this transaction because there was a bribe given," and the transaction would not stand. What was there in this Bill which would protect the Treasury from the consequences of having its transactions set aside in this fashion? It was said the Treasury might, if it thought fit, authorize the Bank to pay a slight commission to the agent. If the Treasury did this, it did not make the transaction better. It was not enough to say the Treasury might do so and that everybody knew it. They ought to put words in the clause to say that it should be lawful for the agent to retain the commission of 1*s.* 6*d.*, and that the transaction should not be liable to be impeached on that account.

MR. W. BECKETT (Nottinghamshire, Bassetlaw) desired to say a word in defence of the bankers. The other night the hon. Baronet the Member for North Antrim (Sir Charles Lewis) said that the country bankers had complained that this commission was not large enough. The country bankers never did anything of the sort. The country bankers had decided that they would give no advice whatever to their clients in a general form as to what they should do, but that all they would undertake to do would be to send out a short statement to say that if their clients wished to convert and to make use of their services, they would be happy to place their services at their disposal. Some hon. Gentlemen had taken exception to the word "commission;" the word seemed to stink in the nostrils of some hon. Members, including the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill). This conversion must be done on behalf of the small stockholders in the country by someone or other. They were entirely ignorant as to how they were to set about the conversion, and they went to their bankers and said—"Will you put this forward for me in the proper way?" Were the bankers not to be remunerated by someone for doing that service? The Chancellor of the Exchequer had very properly explained that, as this was a compulsory conversion of Stock, the holders ought not to be put to any expense by the process of conversion. The right hon. Gentleman said, in effect, in this clause—"We offer you this 1*s.* 6*d.* per cent, in order that the business of the conversion of Stock may be done free of expense to the different holders of Stock." The right hon. Gentlemen the Members for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E.

Gladstone) and Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) objected to the introduction of the words "recognized agents." He (Mr. W. Beckett) also objected to those words. He thought the 1*s*. 6*d*. ought to be granted to everybody. If that were so, the banker would say to his customer—"You are allowed 1*s*. 6*d*. per cent in order to remunerate someone for the trouble of doing this; therefore, if I take the trouble to do it, I shall expect you to pay me this small charge." He had asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer privately to do away with the term "recognized agent," and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian had pointed out how easily that could be done. He (Mr. W. Beckett) thought it would be much better to do away with the term altogether, and let it be a fairly understood thing that 1*s*. 6*d*. per cent would be paid to anyone in order to cover the expense incurred by the compulsory conversion of their Stock.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Richard Webster) (Isle of Wight) desired in a few sentences to enter his protest against the doctrine laid down by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Haddington (Mr. Haldane). He did not think any lawyer would give the opinion that where a Statute had said that an agent should receive 1*s*. 6*d*., or any other fee, for doing certain work, the transaction could be set aside by the principal, on the ground that the agent had received the commission. The very worst that could possibly be made of it was that the principal might claim a share of the 1*s*. 6*d*., on the ground that the relation between principal and agent did not entitle the agent to receive it.

Mr. HALDANE said, the Attorney General had misunderstood him. His complaint was that the Bill did not say that the agent might receive the 1*s*. 6*d*.; it only gave power to the Treasury to pay public money.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.) confessed he had found great difficulty in arriving at a conclusion on this subject. When his right hon. Friend (Mr. Goschen) first brought forward this plan, he did not altogether object to the 1*s*. 6*d*. as a mere commission to meet expenses; but he was startled by the reasons which the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave for that commission. Those reasons led him to consider further; to consider whether it would be proper that this payment should be made. The right hon. Gentleman at first said that a large amount of trouble would be taken by bankers and others in connection with the conversion of the Three per Cents and the Reduced Three per Cents, and that it was in respect of that trouble that he proposed that this money should be paid, but now he could not deny that this commission was intended as an inducement to bankers and others to persuade their customers to convert their Stock. But even if the charge were only to meet money out of pocket, he (Mr. Childers) could not help looking back on what was done in the case of previous conversions. Nothing of this kind was done in the case of the great conversion of Mr. Goulburn; and in 1884, when it was thought advisable to propose to Parliament a great conversion of Stock, not only did they not think it right to offer this inducement, but they made full provision for the expenses actually incurred in applying or dissenting or assenting. Instead of waiting for persons to send in their applications, they sent to all holders of every kind of 3 per cent. Stock forms of acceptance or non-acceptance of 2½ and 2¾ per cent Stocks, properly filled up, and all the holders had to do was to sign their names on one or other of these forms. All expense in connection with the conversion was met in the arrangement of 1884, and, if he was not mistaken, the whole of the expense so incurred and met by the Treasury was something like £5,000. This proposal, as it stood, might result in the payment of £150,000 or £200,000. Therefore, he thought the question of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) was a very pertinent one, and that was—"Why did the Chancellor of the Exchequer find it necessary to spend this large amount?" The Chancellor of the Exchequer had argued that the payment was solely to meet the expense of conversion. It was quite impossible that £150,000 or £200,000 could be the real amount of the expense incurred by the holders of Stock through their agents, whoever they might be, in carrying out this conversion; and, therefore, unless the Chancellor of the Exchequer was able to refute what he (Mr. Childers) had stated, and to show that for the business trouble in the matter more need be spent than was spent in 1884, he should vote against the present proposal.

MR. GOSCHEN said, he did not know whether he would be able to give any assurances which would be satisfactory to his right hon. Friend; but certainly he had every wish to do so. The right hon. Gentleman said that in 1884 circulars were sent out to all holders of Stock. From whom did those circulars come? They came from the Bank of England, an establishment which stood in no relation whatever to those selling or holding the Stock. The consequence was that the circulars were very probably put in the waste paper basket, and the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman failed because of the insufficient means taken to make the holders acquainted with the terms of conversion. It was a very different thing for holders to receive a circular from the Bank of England and to receive a letter from their bankers, or other persons who were competent to advise them, and with whom holders were in communication. He did not know what happened to his right hon. Friend, when he was at the Treasury; but, speaking for himself, he had received countless letters asking for information on every possible point from trustees and other persons. The right hon. Gentleman put it as if it was simply a question of "Yes" or "No;" but there were many questions to be answered—whether they must consult with their fellow-trustees, whether a majority of the trustees could decide, or whether other persons besides the trustees had to be consulted. He had previously no idea of the variety of questions which would arise in connection with the scheme. The sending out of a circular, therefore, was insufficient to acquaint everyone with what was going on. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) put the matter very fairly from an economical point of view. He wished him to say whether or not the conversion could be effected without the payment of the commission. It was extremely difficult to prove a negative. He thought this conversion was a very large scheme, and depended for its success, so far as the voluntary conversion was concerned, on the circumstances of the day, and upon a variety of other circumstances. It was impossible to say for certain whether or not it would have been possible without this payment to have secured this conversion, which he hoped was now within sight; but he would frankly tell the noble Lord that unless he had considered it was right to offer this commission, and that the machinery employed would be the means of bringing home to all Consol-holders what was proceeding, he would have been the last person to propose anything of the kind. He knew beforehand the kind of speeches which would be made by the right hon. Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) and other right hon. Gentlemen. He was fully aware of the gravity of the precedent and the difficulty of carrying out this conversion scheme to a successful issue; and therefore he did not feel inclined to refrain from offering to the holders, through these means, those facilities and that freedom from expense which he trusted they would secure by the measure as now proposed. He regretted that there should be a division of opinion on the subject. He admitted it was a perfectly natural division of opinion, but he trusted the majority of the Committee would sustain the Government in the proposal they had made.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 244; Noes 127: Majority 117.—(Div. List, No. 47.)

Amendment proposed,

In page 7, at end of Clause, insert the following sub-section:—"(2.) The sums of five shillings per cent authorized by this section to be paid, may be treated by trustees and others as income, but if so treated shall not be subject to Income Tax."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he would be good enough to tell the Committee why, if this was income, it should not be subject to Income Tax. He thought the right hon. Gentleman had arrived at a right decision; but perhaps it would be well that he should give the Committee some explanation.

MR. GOSCHEN said, he thought he had explained to the Committee that it was very doubtful whether this was really capital and not income. On the whole, one might say it was equivalent to an increase of the capital value of the Stocks; but on account of its being so small a sum it would be very inconvenient in many cases for trustees to re-invest it, and so they were authorized to treat it as income. If Income Tax had been imposed upon the additional percentage which his right hon. Friend gave, it might be fairly looked upon as capital. Of course he should be glad to have Income Tax upon it; but it struck him it might be considered they were taking away with one hand what they gave with the other.

Mr. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport) suggested that "shall" should be substituted for "may." This would only affect trustees and tenants for life. If they said "may" who was to be the judge, the trustee or the tenant for life? Surely, Parliament ought to decide the matter.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not agree to the suggested Amendment, because most unquestionably in point of law, this was capital and not income. The decisions upon the subject had been more rigid every year. Very recently the House of Lords had overruled the Courts below in declaring that this was capital. Why should they compel trustees to treat as income that which in point of law was clearly capital?

Mr. GOSCHEN said, that in some cases it would be very difficult to re-invest small sums, and he entirely agreed with the right hon. Gentleman that authority ought to be left to trustees to treat this as capital and not as income. It would only amount to 10*s.* on £200 of Stock, to re-invest which would be expensive and troublesome.

Mr. SYDNEY GEDGE said, that supposing a trustee chose to treat this as capital, and a widow lady interested said it was income, who was to decide?

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER said, that the trustee would be enabled to deal with the money as though it were income. The trustee would be the judge on the point.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause 10, as amended, *agreed to.*

Mr. Goschen

PART III.

Ways and Means.

Clause 11 (Creation of New Stock); Clause 12 (power to raise money for redemption of dissentient Stock holders); and Clause 13 (power to raise money for incidental expenses), *agreed to.*

PART IV.

Supplemental.

Clause 14 (Arrangements for conversion, exchange, or redemption); Clause 15 (Application of Act to Stock Certificates); Clause 16 (Provisions as to Savings Banks); and Clause 17 (Powers of Investment), *agreed to.*

Clause 18 (Application to new Stock of trusts, powers, &c., affecting old Stock).

Amendment proposed,

In page 9, at end of Clause, add the following sub-section;—"(2.) In any Act passed or instrument executed before the passing of this Act references to any Stock liable to be converted or exchanged in pursuance of this Act may, if the Stock is so converted or exchanged, be construed as references to new Stock."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. COZENS-HARDY (Norfolk, N.) said, that the clause provided that a distringas which was now operative upon Stock which would be converted should also be operative on the Stock to which it would be converted; but it did not deal with the case of Stock as to which there might be dissent. He hoped the Government would inform the Committee in what way effect would be given to the numerous cases in which there would be such a distringas.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Richard Webster) (Isle of Wight) said, he was obliged to his hon. and learned Friend for calling attention to this matter. The Committee would observe that by Clause 21 the Treasury had power to make rules, and it was proposed, in accordance with the existing practice, that a rule should be made, providing that the money which would be paid would be under the control of the persons having the charge.

Mr. COZENS-HARDY said, the Amendment the Chancellor of the Exchequer had given Notice of was no doubt designed to meet cases where there was a change produced by conversion under the Act. But there was a large class of cases which would not be met by the words proposed. It was doubtful whether this clause as it stood would have any effect upon the will of a living man, and he would propose an Amendment to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Amendment, which he believed the hon. and learned Attorney General assented to.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed, clause 18, page 9, at end of preceding sub-section, add—

"And in the case of any testamentary instrument executed before the passing of this Act, any disposition, which, but for the passing of this Act, would have operated as a specific bequest of any such Stock, shall, if the same is so converted or exchanged, be construed as a specific bequest of such new Stock, and if the same is not so converted, but is paid off or redeemed, shall be construed as a pecuniary legacy of a sum of money equal to the nominal amount of the Stock so paid off or redeemed."—(*Mr. Cozens-Hardy.*)

Question, "That those words be there added," put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 19 (Indemnity to trustees and others) *agreed to.*

Clause 20 (Application to Court in respect of questions arising out of conversion or exchange).

On the Motion of Mr. CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER, the following Amendments made:—In page 9, line 41, after "stock," insert—

"And in particular as to the cases in which, and extent to which, capital may be applied towards meeting any deficiency in income;"

page 10, line 4, after "England," insert "or Wales, subject to the provisions of the Charitable Trusts Acts, 1853 to 1887;" line 5, after "Wales," insert "either on their own motion or on application;" and in line 7, after "court," insert "in the matter of such a charity."

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 21 (Power to make Rules), *agreed to.*

Clause 22 (Provisions as to Bank).

Amendment proposed,

In page 10, at end of Clause, add the following sub-section:—" (5.) Any payment which the Bank are authorized by or under this Act to make to a holder of Stock may be made by warrant, and any such warrant shall be deemed to be a cheque within the meaning of 'The Crossed Cheques Act, 1876,' and the posting of the letter containing the warrant, addressed in the prescribed manner, shall, as respects the liability of the Bank, be equivalent to the delivery of the warrant to the stockholder."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 23 (Remuneration of Banks of England and Ireland); Clause 24 (Definitions); and Clause 25 (Short title), *agreed to.*

On the Motion of Mr. CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER, the following new clauses:—

(Provisions as to Stock belonging to Duchy of Lancaster, &c.)

"(1.) The several provisions of this Act shall extend to stock held on behalf of the Crown, or of the Duchy of Lancaster, or of the Duchy of Cornwall, and to the dividends on such stock.

"(2.) With respect to any stock standing in the name or to the account of the Duchy of Lancaster, any dissent or assent authorized by this Act may be signified by the clerk for the time being of the Council of the Duchy.

"(3.) With respect to any stock standing in the name or to the account of the Duchy of Cornwall, any dissent or assent authorized by this Act may be signified by the Receiver General of the Duchy.

"(4.) With respect to any stock to which the foregoing provisions of this section as to dissent and assent do not apply, and which stands in the name of any public officer or body in trust for the public service, any dissent or assent authorized by this Act may be signified by the public officer or body entitled to receive the dividends on the stock.

"(5.) Any stock held by any officer on behalf of the Court of Chancery, of the county palatine of Lancaster, or of any other Court in England, may be dealt with under this Act in such manner as may be directed by regulations made by the Lord Chancellor,"

agreed to, and *added* to the Bill.

New Clause—

(Power to hold new stock on different accounts.)

"In the registers of new stock, the Bank may allow any holder or joint holders to have more than one account, provided that each account is distinguished either by a number or by such other designation as may be directed by the Bank, and that the Bank shall not be required to permit more than four accounts to be opened in the same name or names,"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer,*)

—*brought up,* and read a first and second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be added to the Bill."

Mr. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport) said, that the clause as it stood gave the bank power to do what it could do already. It stated that the bank might allow any holder to have more than one account. The bank could do that now. It was only according to the rule of the bank that it had not been done. In order to make the thing compulsory the word ought to be "shall," and he moved the omission of the word "may" in line 1 in order to insert the word "shall."

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square) said, that he would agree to the hon. Gentleman's suggestion.

Motion made, and Question proposed, in new Clause, line 1, to leave out "may" and insert "shall." — (*Mr. Sydney Gedge.*)

Question, "That the word 'may' stand part of the new Clause," put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the word 'shall' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to,* and *added* to the Bill.

On the Motion of Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, the following Clause:—

(Provision as to annuitants.)

"(1.) Where under any trust or arrangement other than a charitable trust any stock has been appropriated to provide an annuity, and is, under this Act, liable to be converted into or exchanged for new stock, the person in whose name the stock is standing may, at the request of the annuitant, or, in the case of several annuitants, the majority of them, and at the expense of the annuitant or annuitants, sell the stock, and invest the proceeds either in any manner authorized by the trust or arrangement, or in any manner in which cash under the control of the High Court, or the Court of Session, may for the time being be invested, and shall not be liable for any loss arising from any such sale or investment.

"(2.) In the case of stock standing in the name of Her Majesty's Paymaster General on behalf of the Supreme Court of Judicature in England, or of the Accountant to the Court of Session in Scotland, or of the Accountant General of the Supreme Court of Judicature in Ireland, any such sale or investment may be authorized by the High Court, or the Court of Session, as the case may be.

"(3.) Where, in execution of any trust, or in performance of any duty, and whether in pursuance of the order of any court, or otherwise, any stock has been appropriated to provide an annuity, and is under this Act converted into or exchanged for new stock, the trust or duty shall, so far as relates to the payment of the annuity, be deemed to be executed or performed by the payment of the dividends on the new stock; but nothing in this section shall affect any power of any Court or other authority to make any order as to the application of capital in such cases,"

agreed to, and *added* to the Bill.

New Clause—

(Provisions as to stock mortgages. [See 7 and 8 Vic. c. 5, ss. 15, 16.])

"(1.) An agreement to transfer any amount of New Three per Cent Stock, Consolidated Three per Cent Stock, or Reduced Three per Cent Stock, or generally any amount of Three per Cent Stock, may be satisfied by making a transfer of an equal amount of new stock, or, at the option of the person entitled to the benefit of the agreement, by paying a sum of money equal to the nominal amount of the stock so agreed to be transferred.

"(2.) Where under any mortgage or agreement for a loan any person is bound to pay half-yearly sums equal to the dividends on any specified amount of stock, and that amount of stock is under this Act converted into or exchanged for new stock, the obligation shall be satisfied by the payment of [qu.] quarterly sums equal to the dividends on the same amount of new stock,"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer,*)

—*brought up,* and read a first and second time.

Question proposed, "That the Clause be added to the Bill."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Richard Webster) (Ise of Wight) said, that it would be necessary to make a slight alteration in the clause. The words "or, at the option of the person entitled to the benefit of the agreement," were not necessary in the case of Stock which stood, as this stood, at or about par. He would move the omission of the words.

Amendment proposed, in new Clause, to omit "or, at the option of the person entitled to the benefit of the agreement."—(*Mr. Attorney General.*)

Question, "That these words proposed to be left out stand part of the new clause," put, and *negatived.*

New Clause, as amended, *agreed to,* and *added* to the Bill.

New Clause—

(Power for majority of joint holders to dissent or assent.)

"Where any New Three per Cent Stock, Consolidated Three per Cent Stock, or Reduced Three per Cent Stock is standing in the names of more than two persons as joint holders thereof, the dissent or assent of the majority of those joint holders shall be sufficient for the purposes of this Act,"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer,*)

— *agreed to,* and *added* to the Bill.

New Clause—

(Exemption of certain powers of attorney from stamp duty.)

"A power of attorney given exclusively for the purpose of empowering the attorney to signify any dissent or assent authorized by this Act shall be exempt from stamp duty,"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer,*)

—*brought up*, and read a first and second time, and *added* to the Bill.

New Clause (Provision as to Lunacy Funds) — (*Mr. Attorney General*)—*brought up*, and read a first and second time, *agreed to.*

Clause *agreed to*, and *added* to the Bill.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight) said, that after Clause 20, words ought to be inserted to enable the Lord Chancellor to deal with Lunacy Funds. He had prepared for that purpose a new Clause, which he begged to move.

Clause *agreed to*, and *added* to the Bill.

MR. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport), in moving the insertion, after Clause 17, of a new Clause, said he could not see why the State should pay commission in one case and not in the other.

New Clause—

"The Treasury may, if they think fit, authorize the Bank to pay in respect of New Three per Cent Stock, exchanged for new Stock in pursuance of this Act, an allowance to recognized agents at the rate of one shilling and sixpence for every hundred pounds, or fraction of a hundred pounds Stock so exchanged,"—(*Mr. Sydney Gedge,*)

—*brought up*, and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square) said, he could not assent to the Clause, because no action of the Bank was necessary at all; in the case of assent there was no trouble whatever to be taken. The action was quite automatic. No papers had to be sent in signifying assent, and, therefore, the holders were relieved of any of the steps which had to be taken at the bank in the case of the conversion of Consols and Reduced Three per Cents.

Question put, and *negatived*.

SIR HENRY JAMES (Bury) said, there were a great many small charities in the country receiving a fixed income from Consols left them by testators, with the intention that they should receive that income. That observation also applied to individuals. Under the scheme of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, these incomes would be diminished. For instance, if a charity or individual had been receiving £300, that sum would now be reduced to £250. He proposed to ask the Committee to carry the purpose of the testators into effect, so that charities and individuals might continue to receive their fixed incomes. He did not wish to interfere with the conversion scheme, but suggested that a clause should be inserted, to allow money in such cases as he had mentioned to be re-invested under the direction of the Court of Chancery, so as to secure substantially the same incomes as charities and individuals now received from Consols.

THE CHAIRMAN: The proposed Amendment appears to enable a trustee to extend his power of investment. I have already considered that point in the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for the Elgin Burghs (Mr. Anderson), and I held it to be outside the scope of the Bill, in the absence of special instructions to the Committee. The Amendment cannot be moved without such special instruction, but I think the proposal in the name of the hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Gedge) may be moved.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square) said, that by the indulgence of the Committee he might be allowed to suggest to his right hon. and learned Friend opposite (Sir Henry James) whether an opportunity for bringing forward this proposal might not be secured during the progress of Lord Herschell's Bill. The question was no doubt a very important one, and no doubt the clause suggested by his right hon. and learned Friend went very far. He (Mr. Goschen) undertook to deal with it in some way or other, though it was not dealt with in the present Bill. He had had a great deal of correspondence on the point under discussion, and he was aware that very great interest was excited in regard to it; but he thought it would be much safer to examine it apart from the present measure, and either deal with it in

Lord Herschell's Bill or deal with it separately in another Bill.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby) said, that if the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer would undertake to deal with the question, he supposed that would be taken as sufficient. He had thought from the right hon. Gentleman's statement that he had intended to deal with the subject in this Bill, and, therefore, he (Sir William Harcourt) had been very much surprised by the ruling of the Chairman. He took that ruling as correct; but they certainly had had a statement to the effect that it was the intention of the right hon. Gentleman to relieve trustees in this matter and to allow them to escape from a loss, both in the case of charities and private institutions.

Mr. GOSCHEN said, that so far as annuities were concerned, the question had been dealt with, and it was with regard to annuities that he had made his original statement. But the present proposal went beyond annuities, and affected the case of marriage settlements and other points which were outside the scope of the clauses of this Bill. It would be best not to deal with this matter in a hurry.

Sir HENRY JAMES said, he accepted the ruling of the Chairman; but if he altered the suggested Amendment, leaving out the words which rendered it open to question, he might, perhaps, obtain a ruling in his favour. But he was anxious at that stage not to introduce controversial matter, and he would defer it to the Report stage, by which time he hoped that some understanding would have been arrived at, and that the question would be dealt with. He thought they ought to deal with it in this Bill, and not trust to the Bill of Lord Herschell.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Richard Webster) (Isle of Wight) said, that the right hon. and learned Gentleman would have to consider whether what he proposed would not go too far. The right hon. and learned Gentleman in his suggested Amendment said, "any person," and named no limit as to amount, and that would open up the question as to whether trustees of large amounts might not be left a great deal too free. The Government sympathized with the right hon. and learned Gentlemen's objects, but thought that the matter should not be dealt with without careful consideration.

Mr. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport) said, he thought they ought to pass such a clause as he had put upon the Paper. He would point out that they had testators setting aside certain sums of money in order to produce fixed incomes for certain persons. Such testators instructed trustees and executors to set aside a sufficient amount of Stock to produce the exact sum willed to the annuitant, and to keep that stock intact. Well, the Government now proposed to take off one-twelfth of the income derived from that Stock, and at a future date to take off a sixth. Considering that it was the paramount object of such testators to provide a fixed annuity, it would only be right that the Committee should meet the views of such persons by enacting provisions to enable the stock to be sold and the proceeds invested in such a manner as would make up the amount of the annuity the testator had in his mind. No doubt, if this were not done, there would be a great outcry throughout the country on the part of persons who had money left to them in this way, when they found their incomes reduced by a twelfth, and after a time by one-sixth. There would be no chance of risk in the proposal he made, as the investments could under his clause be made only in securities allowed to Trutees by the Court of Chancery. He, therefore, hoped the Committee would accept his clause.

Mr. GOSCHEN said, he had no objection to the principle of the clause; but he did not know how far the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James) agreed with it, or might think it would interfere with the further steps which he might think it necessary to take.

New Clause—

"When any Stock is held by any person upon trust to secure the payment of a fixed income, the holder of the Stock shall be authorised to invest the proceedings thereof in any of the securities from time to time permitted by the High Court of Justice for the investment of trust funds, notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in the instrument creating or regulating the trust,"—(*Mr. Sydney Gedge,*)

—*brought up*, and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

SIR HENRY JAMES said, he should prefer to have the Amendment accepted, but he should like to have the word "fixed" struck out.

MR. PARKER (Perth) asked, whether it was meant that the amount of the income must be stated on the face of the trust-deed?

MR. GOSCHEN said, there must be some reference to "fixed income." He did not think that any lawyer would assume that a testator intended to have a fixed income, unless there was some fixed income stated on the face of the trust.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT said, that though that was good, so far as it went, it did not meet the general case of marriage settlements, especially the older marriage settlements, and other cases where people had invested certain sums in Consols. Relief was required in those cases, and not where it was intended to secure particular incomes. What was required was that where persons had only power to invest in Consols, that they should in future have power to invest in other Funds which were considered safe which would produce the amount produced by the original investment.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER said, that the proper way to deal with those cases would be by an independent Motion, or by a Bill, or by the introduction of an Amendment into the Bill in the House of Lords. The point that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury referred to was limited amounts, or where it would be a great hardship to have incomes reduced. It would be a question as to how far it would be right to release trustees from the obligation of investing in Consols, when there was an express provision in a trust against any other sort of investment. Perhaps it would be well to wait and allow the right hon. and learned Gentleman to state the exact case he wished to raise on the Report stage.

SIR HENRY JAMES said, he was not limiting his case to any amount. He simply referred to cases of great hardship, and he hoped there would be no limitation in the matter.

MR. COZENS-HARDY (Norfolk, N.) said, the Amendment of the hon. Member (Mr. Sydney Gedge) was limited to fixed incomes, and he (Mr. Cozens-Hardy) proposed to submit an Amendment to it, which he hoped would not be out of Order. He proposed to leave out the first line and to add words, so as to make the clause read—

"When any Stock liable to be converted or exchanged by this Act into new Stock, is held by a trustee, such trustee shall be authorised to invest the proceeds thereof in any of the securities from time to time permitted by the High Court of Justice for the investment of trust funds, notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in the instrument creating or regulating the trust."

A trustee should have this power if there was not any express prohibition. Such prohibitions were very rare, so rare that they would not justify the Committee in keeping back a clause of this kind which would be of great advantage to trustees. He would move the Amendment.

THE CHAIRMAN: The clause has not yet been read a second time.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed,

In the first line of the proposed new clause to leave out the words "held by any person upon trust to secure the payment of a fixed income," in order to insert the words "liable to be converted or exchanged by this Act into new Stock, is held by a trustee." —(*Mr. Cozens-Hardy.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed new Clause."

MR. GOSCHEN said, that this Amendment introduced rather a new question, giving, as it did, the right of conversion in all cases. It might arrest conversion to a considerable extent, which would not be the object of the hon. Gentleman. He should be sorry to accept such words without having had an opportunity of considering them; and he would suggest to the hon. Member the advisability of bringing them up on Report. He should be glad if the hon. Member would get rid of the words "liable to conversion." In cases where it was said in the trust that the money was to be invested, it did not at all follow that in the event of the amount of interest realized in such investment being changed, the testator would have desired a change to be made in the description of Stock invested in.

SIR HENRY JAMES said, that there were, no doubt, cases in which a testator had stated—"I leave £1,000, or I leave £10,000, to produce such and such a sum per annum," intending the legatee to have that fixed amount. A testator might have left a sum to realize £300 a-year, never intending, under any circumstances, that the charity or the legatee should only have £250 a-year; therefore, if they accepted the words "fixed income," this clause would become nugatory. The phrase "fixed income," if left in the clause, would, so far as old settlements were concerned, negative the whole object of this concession. Therefore, he would ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to consider this matter on Report. These words were fatal to all he (Sir Henry James) contended for.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. Member (Mr. Cozens-Hardy) withdraw his Amendment?

Mr. COZENS-HARDY: Yes, Sir; I withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Question, "That the Clause be added to the Bill," put, and *agreed to.*

Preamble *agreed to.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report the Bill, as amended, to the House."

Sir CHARLES LEWIS (Antrim, N.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer if the Bill will be reprinted before the Report?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I am sorry to say it will be quite impossible to have the Bill reprinted before the Report stage. Indeed, we shall have to ask the indulgence of the House with the view of taking the measure at 12 o'clock to-morrow, and before the Business on the Paper is proceeded with. I am exceedingly sorry that it will be necessary to postpone the Motion on the Paper; but I think the debate upon the Report stage of the present Bill will be extremely short, as the discussion we have had this afternoon has cleared away all debatable points.

Mr. GOSCHEN: There are only two points remaining over, that is to say, the question of the Charity Commissioners, and the question which has just been raised.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: I am sorry the right hon. Gentleman has felt it necessary to make this demand upon the time of the House. He knows there is a debate of very great importance coming on to-morrow, and I do not think the Government have any reason to complain of the manner in which this Bill has been dealt with this morning in the House. There has been every disposition shown to get forward with Public Business. I trust that every effort will be made to deal with the Report stage of this Bill without interfering with the discussion which is to come on to-morrow.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I would point out to the right hon. Gentleman and the House, that this Bill has to be passed in the House of Lords. The Easter Holidays are coming on very soon, and then there will be the Commission for obtaining the Royal Assent; therefore, the time at the disposal of Parliament for passing the Bill is extremely limited. If this Bill is allowed to go on to-morrow morning, I really do not think that much time will be consumed by it; half-an-hour, at the most, will suffice.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) I must say I think it a little unfair that this proposal should have been sprung upon the House without Notice in the absence of any Irish Members. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury is asking a privilege or taking a right. If he is asking a concession in appealing to the House to take the Report stage of this Bill to-morrow morning, I must say that if I am in my place at the commencement of Public Business to-morrow, I shall raise my voice against it. Of course, if he is taking this as a right, there will be no opportunity of resisting him, and there is no more to be said. I think, however, I can suggest to the right hon. Gentleman a very easy way out of the difficulty. Let him bring on the Report stage of this Bill after the discussion of the Bill of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell.) I do not see why the discussion on the Bill of the hon. Member for the City of Cork should not close soon after 5 to-morrow evening. If the opposition offered to that Bill is obstructive, we shall be willing to assist the right hon. Gentleman in making a Motion to effect a Closure, and he would then have plenty of time to spare for the consideration of this Bill.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I have not the least desire to interpose or bring about the least delay in the consideration of the measure to which the hon. Member refers. The extreme necessity of the case is my only apology for asking the House to depart from its usual practice. I will consider the proposal of the hon. Gentleman, and if I can meet it, I will be happy to do so.

Mr. ANDERSON (Elgin and Nairn): I do not think that the Government should make up their minds that the discussion on the Report stage of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Bill will be of a merely formal character. The proposal the right hon. Gentleman has just consented to consider, deals with matters of re-investment in Colonial and other securities which are perfectly sound. It is intended to raise that point on the Report stage, and, therefore, I do not think that the Government can assume that the debate will be a purely formal one.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): On the question of Order, before this Bill leaves the Committee, I should like to ask if I am to understand that you, Sir, have ruled that the point raised by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury cannot be raised in Committee, because, according to the new Rule of the House, if it cannot be raised in Committee it cannot be raised on Report? It is, therefore, important that we should know what is your ruling on that matter. If we cannot raise it on Report, it might be necessary for us to do so on the third reading, and if we cannot do so on the third reading, it might be necessary for us to move that the Bill be re-committed, in order to enable this point to be dealt with.

The CHAIRMAN: The question of the enlarging of the power of investment, whether by trustees or otherwise, would be out of Order and cannot be introduced into this Bill without a distinct Instruction; but where a definite amount of income is bequeathed arising out of Consols, that question may be dealt with in this Bill, and Amendments upon the subject dealing with small amounts would be admitted.

Sir WILLIAM HAROURT: May I ask what is the small amount according to your definition, Sir, for if we are bound on the question, some limit or figure should be given.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps I was wrong in using that phrase. Where Stock is left to produce a fixed income and the interest on that Stock is affected, that income is necessarily affected, but the mere diminution of income generally would not justify the insertion of any clause in the Bill to enlarge these powers.

Sir HENRY JAMES: When this Bill comes before us on Report, should I be at liberty to move to strike out the words "fixed income?"

The CHAIRMAN: I should have thought not, but that would be a question for Mr. Speaker.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *reported.*

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Do I understand the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury to say that he intends to put down the Bill for to-morrow morning?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: Yes.

Mr. DILLON: Why is that?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: There are two courses open to us—one is that the Bill should be taken to-morrow before the Business on the Paper is proceeded with, on the distinct understanding, so far as the Government is concerned, that it will not occupy more than half-an-hour; and the other is that we should suspend the half-past 5 o'clock Rule to-morrow (Wednesday), and arrange for the continuation of the Sitting at 6 o'clock, so as to make it certain that the debate will continue to-morrow. One of these two courses is necessary in order that we may conclude the measure. I will confer with hon. Gentlemen opposite, and if I have a sufficient assurance that the latter course will be the one they prefer, I will adopt it.

Mr. DILLON: We decidedly prefer the latter course. We have sufficient evidence that an intention exists on the Benches opposite to interfere with the progress of the Bill of the hon. Member for the City of Cork. On our part, we have no desire to impede the progress of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's measure; but if the right hon. Gentleman takes the course of putting down the Government Bill in the first place on the Paper to-morrow, he will be doing a great injustice to the hon. Member for the City of Cork. Let me explain to the right hon. Gentleman that there are Members in this House—I do not wish to refer to individuals—who have a great objection to the Bill of the hon. Member for the City of Cork being brought to an issue, and we do not know that they will not enter into a long discussion of the Government Bill in order to prevent our Bill coming on.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: On receiving an assurance that the debate on the Bill of the hon. Member for the City of Cork will be concluded by half-past 5, or before half-past 5, and that the Division will be taken, then I will move to suspend the Order with regard to the cessation of Opposed Business at half-past 5, and so regulate the Sitting that it may be possible to have the two Government Bills passed.

Bill, as amended, to be considered *To-morrow.*

EAST INDIA (PURCHASE AND CONSTRUCTION OF RAILWAYS) BILL.

(*Sir John Gorst, Mr. Jackson.*)

[BILL 143.] COMMITTEE.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clauses 1 to 4, inclusive, *agreed to.*

Dr. CLARK (Caithness) said, he thought the Government should give them some information upon several points in this Bill. The measure was introduced at a very late hour one night, and hon. Members had no opportunity of hearing its provisions discussed. The Government should give their reasons for the Bill, and how they intended to spend the £10,000,000 which they asked for.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Sir John Gorst) (Chatham) said, that if he were to respond to the invitation of the hon. Member, the Chairman would very soon call him to Order. He should be very happy to explain anything in the clauses as they came on; but, of course, he could not give a general statement as to the objects of the Bill.

Remaining Clauses, Schedule, and Preamble *agreed to.*

Mr. Dillon

Bill *reported,* without Amendment; to be read the third time upon *Thursday.*

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—ORDER OF PUBLIC BUSINESS.

OBSERVATIONS.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): Before you leave the Chair, Sir, at the close of this Morning Sitting, perhaps I may be allowed to mention the method by which I propose to carry out the arrangement at which we have arrived. I propose to move to-morrow, at 12 o'clock—

> "That the 'Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill' and the 'National Debt Conversion Bill' be taken next after the 'Land Law (Ireland) Acts Amendment Bill,' and that thereupon the Standing Order regarding the Sittings of the House so far as these two Bills are concerned, be suspended for the day."

I think that will meet the necessities of the case.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): And that I suppose will be carried without Amendment or debate? Is it under the Standing Order which enables it to be carried without debate?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: No; but I cannot imagine that there will be any objection on the part of hon. Members opposite.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Our desire is that it should be done under the Standing Order that prevents debate.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I do not think that it could come under any such Standing Order.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Standing Order would not apply in this case.

It being Seven of the clock, the House suspended its Sitting.

The House resumed its Sitting at Nine of the clock.

MOTIONS.

MEMORANDUM OF SIR CHARLES WARREN (MR. BAGGALLAY).

RESOLUTION.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.), in rising to call attention to the Memorandum issued by Sir Charles Warren to his subordinates reflecting upon the administration of justice by

Mr. Baggallay, the police magistrate of West Ham; and to move—

> "That this House regrets that the Chief Commissioner of Metropolitan Police should, in an official Memorandum read to his subordinates, have reflected on the administration of the Law by Mr. Ernest Baggallay, one of the Stipendiary Magistrates of the Metropolis, and is of opinion that such a course must tend to produce a most prejudicial effect, by weakening the authority of the Magistrate over the Police within his jurisdiction,"

said, he wished to direct attention to a matter which, to some extent, was parallel with the case which occupied some time of the House last Session, and in regard to which the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews), by the attitude he adopted—especially in its earlier stages — eventually involved the Government of which he was a Member in an ignominious but deserved defeat. He (Mr. Pickersgill) thought it would be a matter of some surprise to the House that the Government had so soon forgotten the salutary lesson which had been read to them. He had said that the case to which he now desired to draw the attention of the House had some features in common with that to which attention was called last Session. It might be a coincidence —it might be something more than a coincidence—that in the two cases of this kind in which Sir Charles Warren had come into the sharpest conflict with the public, he had bolstered two constables who, by evidence given in open Court, took away, or endeavoured to take away —that must have been, at all events, the effect of their evidence—the characters of two young women—young women, it was true, occuping a very humble position in life, but not on that account, he submitted, less entitled to the respect, and, if necessary, the protection of the House. Now, what were the facts of this case? On Wednesday, the 25th January last, a young woman named Annie Coverdale was charged at the West Ham Police Court with being drunk and disorderly by Police-constable Bloy. The policeman told one story, the girl told another. In order to save time he did not think he need trouble the House with either, because they did not appear to be relevant to the main purpose, and he now came to what was relevant—namely, the questions which were addressed to Bloy by the learned magistrate—

> "Mr. Baggallay (to the constable): What makes you say she was drunk?—Constable Bloy: Her general appearance. Mr. Baggallay: What do you mean by 'general appearance'?—Bloy: Well, she could not walk straight, Sir, and she swore at me. Mr. Baggallay: Do you know her?—Bloy: Oh, yes, Sir; I have known her two or three years. Prisoner: Sir, we have not been in Canning Town three years. Mr. Baggallay (to the constable): How long have you known her? Now, do be careful.—Bloy: Well I have known her 12 months, I am sure. Mr. Baggallay: You said just now that you had known her for years. Have you seen her out at night before? —Bloy: Oh, yes, Sir. Mr. Baggallay: How long?—Bloy: Every night, for the last three or four months, up to 12 and 1 in the morning, walking about with sailors or seafaring men. Different men, Sir,"

Then the prisoner burst in—

> "It is false, Sir (bursting into tears); it is false, Sir. I am not a girl of that sort. I am respectable, Sir. I have been in two respectable situations in Southampton, and have references in my possession, Sir. I have been asked to go back to my last situation. If I was such a girl as the constable says, I should not be asked to do that. (Here she handed testimonials, which were perused by the magistrate.) She further said that when the constable took her into custody he struck her, and when they passed her house she asked him to knock at the door and tell her father; but he refused, saying, 'You do not live there. I know your father well enough.' Another policeman having stated on oath that in his opinion Coverdale was drunk, two independent witnesses and the prisoner's mother were called and swore that she was quite sober. The landlady of the house where prisoner's young man lodged said that Constable Bloy ran into her house and said he would arrest the young man for stealing, when really it was the other man. He was much excited, and treated the youug woman very roughly."

Then Mr. Baggallay gave his decision in the following terms:—

> "There seems to have been a disturbance there, and a man undoubtedly was the worse for drink. There is no evidence at all that this young woman was the worse for drink, except that given by Bloy. I should be sorry to act upon his evidence, remembering the answers he gave. I do not think there is any ground for the suggestions he has made about the young woman being seen out with seafaring men. In fact, I do not believe his evidence at all, and (to the prisoner) I discharge you."

Then, the report concluded—

> "The young woman left the Court with her mother, the latter weeping bitterly."

Well, this case attracted a good deal of attention, and much public sympathy was enlisted on behalf of the young woman. But on the 1st February the case had a new development. On that day, when Mr. Baggallay took his seat on the Bench he made the following observation:—

"On Monday morning last the Commissioners of Police, after a private inquiry into the case of Miss Coverdale—who was tried before me on the 25th January—directed a Memorandum in which the following passage occurs, to be read out to the constables of the K Division."

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

Mr. PICKERSGILL said, the hon. and learned Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Addison) interrupted him at a very significant point. He had been just about to quote to the House the comments of Mr. Baggallay on this Memorandum of the Chief Commissioner, and his comments are as follows:—

"On Monday morning last, the Commissioners of Police, after a private inquiry into the case of Miss Coverdale—which was tried before me on 25th January—directed a Memorandum, in which the following passage occurs, to be read out to the constables of the K Division:—'The Commissioners have had the case under their consideration, and have decided to exonerate Bloy. They further regret that Mr. Baggallay came to so hasty a decision, and that he did not give the constable an opportunity to call the sergeant who was on duty at the station, and others who could have given corroborative evidence.'"

Mr. Baggallay then said—

"Although the contents of this document were communicated by the police to the Press on Monday last, and appeared in the evening papers on that day, my request made yesterday morning for a copy of it has not been complied with, and I am compelled to rely on the Press report, which I am told by the inspector is an accurate one. The Commissioners were perfectly justified in making an inquiry and forming an independent judgment on the conduct of the constable; but, as a police magistrate, I protest against the Commissioners making such an accusation against me in a Memorandum addressed to the police-constables in the borough over which I have jurisdiction, and still more do I protest against such an accusation being made after a secret inquiry, and without any communication with myself as to the accuracy of the statements upon which it was founded. If the Commissioners were informed that I did not give the police an opportunity of calling any further witnesses, such information is absolutely untrue. In answer to myself, the constable stated that he had no other witnesses to call, and did not even suggest that anyone else could throw any further light on the case. I state most emphatically that the constable had every opportunity of calling any witnesses he chose, and that the charge of haste in my decision is entirely groundless."

The magistrate's remarks were received with applause by a crowded Court. Now, in the first place, he (Mr. Pickersgill) would ask the House to observe how Sir Charles Warren treated this case. He exonerated Bloy, but he removed him to another district; and in answer to his (Mr. Pickersgill's) inquiry, the Home Secretary gave this — which seemed to him very extraordinary—explanation. The right hon. Gentleman said it was the custom of the Police Force, when a police officer was found fault with by the magistrate, to remove him out of the district of that magistrate's Court. He would ask the House to consider what that meant. It meant this, that if the police magistrate had occasion to censure a policeman for giving his evidence unsatisfactorily, the policeman was removed to a district where, in the ordinary course, he would never appear as a witness before that magistrate again; but he would, in the ordinary discharge of his police duties, appear before some other magistrate again. A magistrate might be glad to get rid of a policeman whom he believed to be untrustworthy; but how about the protection of the public? From the public point of view it would be a far safer course to leave the man whom the magistrate had pronounced to be untrustworthy in the old district, because then, when he came up to give evidence against a citizen, the magistrate would severely scrutinize his evidence; but what did Sir Charles Warren do? In Bloy's case he sent the man to another district, leaving him on police duty, so that in the ordinary course it would be necessary for him to give evidence in the box, and come up before a magistrate who knew nothing about his character, and who would, probably, attach to his evidence a credit which it did not deserve. He (Mr. Pickersgill) could hardly imagine a course that was better calculated at once to defeat the ends of justice and imperil the liberty of the citizen. What was the cause and root of it all? There was a fetish set up in Scotland Yard, which was "the credit of the force," and to that fetish, he was sorry to say, everything latterly appeared to be sacrificed—even the interests of the truth and the liberty of London citizens. Local public opinion, which in a matter of this kind was extremely important, had expressed itself in this case. On the 14th February last, a deputation of the ratepayers of West Ham attended before the Town Council for the purpose of expressing their concurrence in the action of the stipendiary magistrate in this case of Constable Bloy. A member of the deputation—Mr. C. C. Hutchinson—made these remarks—

> "They appeared to urge an important matter on the Council's consideration—The recent action of the Police Commissioners towards the authorities of the borough in the execution of their duty for the maintenance of law and order. At the outset he would disclaim any intention to make party capital. He would also disclaim any sentimental notions, and the idea that they had any antagonism to the police; on the contrary, he would bear testimony as to the way the police discharged their onerous duties. The Commissioners had recently acted in such a way as to bring those responsible for decency and public order into disrepute. It made no difference, in his opinion, whether Miss Coverdale was or was not all she should be, the action of the Police Commissioners was not only inconsiderate, but most discourteous. They held an official secret meeting—if he were permitted he would call it a conclave of the deities of Scotland Yard—and the result was that the decision of the police magistrate was brought into contempt. The manner in which that decision was come to was calculated to rob the public of confidence in the decisions that were given at the Police Courts; and in face of the way in which Sir Charles Warren had ridden roughshod over the constituted authority, he would ask how 'law and order' was to be maintained in the borough? The deputation desired to know whether the best way would not be to endeavour to get the control of the police in their own hands. He ventured to say that if the police in West Ham had been under the charge of a Watch Committee, this scandal would not have arisen, and such an arrangement would secure the magistrates and police against official interference from the authorities of Scotland Yard."

Another member of the deputation, Mr. C. Boardman, spoke of the universal satisfaction which the decision of Mr. Baggallay had given to rich and poor alike, and denounced the rule of Sir Charles Warren as a military despotism. Mr. Baggallay had not long ceased to be a Member of this House. He left them, he (Mr. Pickersgill) was sure, with the good wishes of them all, and it must be a satisfaction to all, whether political friends or political opponents, to find this testimony given of the fact that since his appointment to the judicial bench, he had held the scales of justice with an even hand, and had won the universal good opinion of the people over whom he had jurisdiction. Well, the Mayor of West Ham (Mr. George Hay) in replying, said—

> "He felt in a rather peculiar position, and personally he would have preferred that this matter had not been brought under the cognizance of the Council. Those who had seen the reports of the proceedings in the House of Commons must feel that something would come out of it, and for this reason he wished the matter had come before them later on. There was one point, however, on which he thoroughly sympathized with the deputation, and that was the feeling that Mr. Baggallay had been shamefully treated by Sir Charles Warren. Every reasonable, straightforward man with any brains felt convinced that it was a most unfair action on the part of the Police Commissioners."

The Mayor added that the matter was about to be brought under the notice of the House of Commons, and that, therefore, it should remain in abeyance for the present. So much for the expression of local public opinion. But the public opinion of a much wider area had also been expressed upon this subject. The matter had been treated by two journals. It had been treated pictorially in the columns of our venerable friend *Punch*, and it had been treated editorially in the columns of *The Standard*. He (Mr. Pickersgill) would not wound the feelings of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary by referring to the drawings in *Punch*. He had no doubt the right hon. Gentleman saw it. Even if he had not happened to see it himself, some good natured friend would have been sure to point it out to him. It would, however, be worth while to read one or two lines from the article which appeared in *The Standard*. That newspaper said—

> "Nobody knows better than himself that the public confidence in the honesty and intelligence of the police force in connection with duties which imperatively demand both, is not exactly what it was, and he ought to have been exceptionally careful, in any fresh case that might arise, to do nothing that was calculated to re-awaken these feelings of distrust. The case of Constable Bloy has served to revive and to intensify them; and by withholding from the public the grounds on which he came to a conclusion adverse to that of the magistrate, who had heard both sides of the story, the Chief Commissioner has, we think, committed a grave error of judgment, which is much to be regretted. We cannot allow that either the delinquencies or the excesses of policemen should be withdrawn behind the veil of official privilege, adjudicated upon with closed doors, and the result announced to the world with the curtness proper to a court martial. If the authorities at Scotland Yard have one test of truth, and the police magistrates another, we have a right to know wherein they differ, if not to say which of the two shall be preferred. It is a serious mistake to attempt to regulate the police on a military model, or to try to make a

> little Horse Guards out of Scotland Yard. The two institutions stand on a totally distinct footing. Both the Army and the police are, in one sense, servants of the public; but the police, Sir Charles must remember, are so in another, and a very different, sense from that in which the Army is. The former, it cannot too often be repeated, are employed in a class of services which bring them into a close relation with our privacy, and admit them to be spectators of our faults, our follies, and our vices, almost as much as if they were in the position of domestic servants."

There were two objections which might possibly be raised by the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary to the Motion he (Mr. Pickersgill) had brought forward to-night. In the first place, the right hon. Gentleman might say that they had not the Memorandum before them. That was quite true; but he (Mr. Pickersgill) asked whose fault was that? He had asked the right hon. Gentleman to lay the Memorandum on the Table, but he had declined to do so. But although they had not the Memorandum they had the copy of it, which was read in open Court by Mr. Ernest Baggallay on the 1st of February, certified to be correct by the police inspector, and remaining uncontradicted to this moment; and every sensible man would see that if the terms of the Memorandum itself, if laid on the Table, would put a different and a better complexion on this matter, there could be no reasonable doubt that the Memorandum would have been produced. Then there was another possible objection — namely, that the Chief Commissioner was bound to institute an inquiry in consequence of the remarks which the magistrate had made. He (Mr. Pickersgill) was quite willing to admit that that was so; but what was the nature of the inquiry which the Chief Commissioner instituted? He undertook to re-hear the case; but what did he do? He examined police witnesses only. He heard one side of the case only; and then he came to a conclusion different from that of the magistrate who had heard both sides of the case. Having done this, the Chief Commissioner exonerated Constable Bloy. The reputation of Bloy and the reputation of the girl were so mixed up in this case that to exonerate Bloy took away the character of the girl. He (Mr. Pickersgill) maintained, therefore, that for the Chief Commissioner to exonerate Bloy without communicating with Mr. Baggallay, was showing a great want of courtesy to the learned magistrate. But the Chief Commissioner did not stop there. He actually went out of his way to make a grave reflection on the conduct of the case by the magistrate. He charged him with having given a hasty decision; he charged him, also, with having excluded evidence which he ought to have received. Well, he (Mr. Pickersgill) submitted that, next to corruption itself—next to charging a magistrate with being bought by money in his office—there were no charges more odious than those which were brought by Sir Charles Warren. And then came the additional aggravation that these charges were read out to the constables serving within the jurisdiction of Mr. Baggallay. What, in the opinion of any reasonable man, must be the effect of that course? Surely it must be this—to teach to the policemen this pernicious lesson, that the censures of the magistrates were of no account provided only they could retain the good graces of the Commissioner, who heard only one side of the case. Perhaps he (Mr. Pickersgill) might be permitted to say that he had been disappointed with the attitude of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary in reply to two or three questions which he had addressed to him on this subject. It was really the Cass case over again so far as the Home Secretary was concerned. He had not, by a single word, expressed his censure or his disapprobation of what had been done by Sir Charles Warren. What he did say was this. He said—

> "I have tendered to the magistrate—I hope to his satisfaction—the explanation which I thought was called for."

Two or three times the right hon. Gentleman had said he trusted his explanations had been satisfactory. It was to be observed that the right hon. Gentleman had never gone the length of saying that his explanations had been satisfactory. But even supposing that they had been satisfactory to Mr. Baggallay, with all respect to that Gentleman, that would not be enough. It was not enough to soothe the wounded feelings of the magistrate. What was wanted was to restore the confidence of the public, and the confidence of the public could alone be restored by proceeding in a manner which was open and above board. He (Mr. Pickersgill) protested against this policy of hugger-mugger. He believed that a Government of dark corners would never retain, as it certainly did not deserve to retain, the confidence of the country. The people who sent Members to this House had just as much right to information as any hon. or right hon. Member of the House. Indeed, if it came to that, it seemed to him that they had a better title—a better and a higher title because their title was original and the title hon. Members had was simply derived from them. It would be equally averse, both from his intention and from his policy, to say anything which could be regarded as personally offensive to the Home Secretary, but he thought that the right hon. Gentleman could not but be aware that people outside were saying that he was afraid of this terrible Chief Commissioner. However that might be, this House, at all events, was not afraid of him, at least not yet. He quite believed that Sir Charles Warren was a sort of spurious Cromwell, who would even order his myrmidons to remove the "bauble" from the Table of the House with very little compunction, but in these days sham Cromwells, wherever they were found, were simply mischievous anacronisms, and they were especially mischievous at the head of the Metropolitan Police, which ought to be purely a civil force. He would, therefore, ask the House to check this military and militant Chief Commissioner, and at the same time vindicate the learned magistrate who seemed to have enjoyed in a very eminent degree the confidence of the people who lived within his jurisdiction. He begged to move the Motion standing in his name on the Paper.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That this House regrets that the Chief Commissioner of Metropolitan Police should, in an official Memorandum read to his subordinates, have reflected on the administration of the Law by Mr. Ernest Baggallay, one of the Stipendiary Magistrates of the Metropolis, and is of opinion that such a course must tend to produce a most prejudical effect by weakening the authority of the Magistrate over the Police within his jurisdiction.—(*Mr. Pickersgill.*)

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.) said, he could not help feeling that the hon. Member had given undue importance and significance to this case. Mr. Baggallay was a gentleman whom he had himself appointed to the magisterial bench, and although he never made an appointment on which he congratulated himself more, he was perfectly certain that Mr. Baggallay would give satisfaction on the magisterial bench of the Metropolis. Therefore nobody ought to suppose that anything he had done or said, or might do or say, in reference to this case, implied the slightest censure on Mr. Baggallay. On the occasion in question the learned magistrate had before him one of those cases which occurred in scores in every Police Court in the Metropolis—the ordinary case in which the prisoner was charged with drunk and disorderly conduct. The Police-constable Bloy, who arrested the prisoner, seemed, so far as he could judge from the reports in the newspapers, to be a bad and unsatisfactory witness, and he was disbelieved by Mr. Baggallay, who, moreover, told Bloy in open Court that he did not believe his evidence at all. No doubt Mr. Baggallay had full ground for coming to the decision he did, and he (Mr. Matthews) did not presume to find fault with him for having done so; a magistrate was entitled to state the impression that a witness's evidence produced upon his mind. Nobody, however, could deny that an observation of that kind falling publicly from the bench was of the most serious moment to the person against whom it was made, and especially to a member of the police force. If it was sustained and well-founded the man's career in life was at an end and he was a ruined man, and therefore, while fully admitting Mr. Baggallay's perfect right to make what comments he thought fit, the hon. Member would himself see that the Commissioner of Police was bound, after the scene which occurred, to make full inquiry into all the facts. The hon. Member complained that in the course of that inquiry the Commissioner examined none but the members of the police force. That was true in the first instance, but the Commissioner proceeded further and made an elaborate and careful investigation in the neighbourhood where the young woman lived, and he also saw the father of the young woman.

Mr. PICKERSGILL observed that when this question was first raised, the right hon. Gentleman distinctly informed him that only police witnesses were examined.

Mr. MATTHEWS said, that it was perfectly true that in the first instance only police witnesses were examined, but the Commissioner afterwards continued the inquiry, and made it much more full and complete by the examination of a number of witnesses not in the police force. That was after the Answer he gave to the hon. Member. He felt some difficulty in dealing with the case, because he was most anxious not to drop one word calculated to give pain to the family concerned, and therefore if he spoke with great caution he hoped the hon. Member would not suppose he had not matters to allege which would be of great moment in coming to a conclusion on the whole of the circumstances. The hon. Member complained that the inquiry was secret. It was, no doubt, a secret inquiry, but it was impossible that such inquiries could be other than secret, in the sense that the public were not admitted. In the first place, the persons examined were those members of the police force who knew about the facts. There were, he thought, three policemen who were witnesses of the girl's arrest and two more who saw her at the station when the charge was taken, and, in particular, at the station there was a superintendent who was highly respected in the force and whose veracity was unquestioned. Having made such inquiries as seemed fit in the first instance to throw light on the facts, it would not be disputed that the Chief Commissioner was bound to act on his own conclusions. Whatever respect one would pay to the impression Mr. Baggallay formed and expressed from hearing Bloy give his evidence in Court, the hon. Member himself would not deny that, in justice to Bloy, the Commissioner was bound to make up his own mind according to the information he collected. He heard the evidence of several members of the police force whom Mr. Baggallay did not hear, through no fault of his own, but simply from the shape the proceedings in Court took. The Commissioner having made this inquiry, which he was bound to make, and having received evidence which satisfied him that the charge against the girl was not an unfounded charge, and, more than that, that Bloy had good warrant for asserting what he had asserted, was bound not to conceal or modify his opinion simply because it happened to be at variance with the decision of the magistrate. He (Mr. Matthews) hoped he might be allowed to put it in that way without seeming to say anything that pressed against the girl. It would have been a most cruel thing to punish Bloy in view of the Commissioner's decision; and here he might say that Bloy himself was far from wishing to make against Annie Coverdale the grosser imputation which undoubtedly his words seemed to convey to the magistrate's mind, and which, apparently, they conveyed to the hon. Member's mind. According to the inquiry it was clear that Bloy had no intention to make any imputation of the sort. Before he passed away from this point he desired to add that in consequence of the sort of public outcry that had been raised in reference to this matter, as well as for his own satisfaction, he directed the Solicitor to the Treasury—a gentleman of great experience, to whom no taint of partiality could apply, and whose fairness was unquestioned—to inquire into this matter. That gentleman had inquired into the matter, and without entering into the details of that inquiry—which he did not think it would be right or fair to enter into—he might say that that gentleman in his report had found that Bloy was justified in the evidence he gave. He had no desire to enter into the question whether the Solicitor to the Treasury was right in the conclusion at which he had arrived, or whether the Chief Commissioner of Police was right in the conclusion at which he had arrived; he merely wished to place before the House the judgment at which those gentlemen had arrived as the result of the inquiry they had held, which exonerated Police-constable Bloy from the charge which had been made against him. The Chief Commissioner of Police having arrived at the conclusion he had indicated, it was the duty of the Chief Commissioner to communicate that conclusion to Police-constable Bloy and to the other constables who had been connected with him in the matter. The Memorandum of the Chief Commissioner, which was addressed to the superintendent of Bloy's district, was in these terms :—

> "I beg to inform Police-constable Bloy and others in your division connected with this matter that after full inquiry I have come to the conclusion that Police-constable Bloy spoke the truth upon the occasion in question, and that I regret that the magistrate should have doubted his veracity without giving him an opportunity of calling the superintendent who took the charge and others who could have spoken on the subject."

The Memorandum, therefore, did not contain the expression "that the magistrate had come to a hasty decision." He quite agreed that it was a want of decorum and of good taste in any way to refer to the magistrate's decision, but it was evident that it was the desire of the Chief Commissioner to explain that he had arrived at that conclusion which differed from that of the magistrate on grounds which were not before the magistrate. It was no fault of the magistrate that he had not heard the whole of the evidence, neither was it the fault of Police-constable Bloy. Explanations had been offered to Mr. Baggallay, Sir Charles Warren had communicated with the learned magistrate, thoroughly deprecating—being a magistrate himself—any supposed disrespect to a magistrate on the bench. Coupled with this explanation he (Mr. Matthews) had sent Mr. Baggallay a full and complete expression of regret and apology for what had occurred, and for that Mr. Baggallay had thanked him. This being the case, it was not desirable that that House should, on the slight evidence before it, either agree to this Resolution or reject it, either of which courses might be supposed to amount to a Vote of Censure upon one or other of the parties, and he, therefore, begged to move the Previous Question.

Mr. SPEAKER, on rising to propose that Question, addressed the House as followeth :—

> The Right honourable Gentleman proposes to move the Previous Question. If I were to propose that Question in the customary form, the terms of the Motion would be "That that Question be now put," words which are almost identical with the words of the Motion for the Closure of a Debate. Moreover, hitherto, when a Member moves the Previous Question, he votes against his own Motion. I therefore think that the present occasion affords a good opportunity for establishing a precedent. I therefore propose, if I should obtain the full sanction of the House to my suggestion, to adopt instead of the present form of the Previous Question, the words "That the Question be not now put."

And, the general assent of the House being signified,

Question proposed, "That the Question be not now put."—(*Mr. Secretary Matthews.*)

Mr. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) said, he thought it was most extraordinary that the Commissioner of Police should have power to revise decisions of magistrates. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) had said that the evidence of Bloy had been to some extent corroborated, yet Bloy denied his own assertion. The constable said he had known this girl for years; but afterwards admitted that he had only known her for months. The good character of a girl was so precious to her, that a police-constable guilty of injuring it ought to be immediately cashiered. The Home Secretary said it was a very grave thing for a constable to be censured. No doubt it was; and he recognized at once the great difficulties of the Metropolitan Police. But, after all, to censure a police-constable for giving wrong evidence before a magistrate was a very small matter compared with the ruination of the character of a girl. He hoped the Home Secretary, who was responsible, to a very great extent, for the conduct of the police in London, would see that greater care was exercised by police-constables in giving evidence in Courts of Justice. A similar case to the one under consideration occurred not very long ago—only a few months ago. The case came under his knowledge; but he would not designate the district in which it occurred too minutely. A police-constable said, in regard to a certain respectable married lady, that he had seen her at a particular railway station. She was almost turned out of that station in consequence of the assertion of the constable. Happily for her she had ample evidence to prove her innocence. She took the case to Court, and there she got damages against the man who originally made the statement reflecting upon her character. Had there been no circumstances connected with the case which enabled the lady to refute the charge made against her, her character might have been ruined before her husband and her children. It was of the utmost importance that police-constables should rather tell less than the truth than more than the truth; and if the bringing forward of the Bloy incident to-night resulted in some action being taken by the Home Office to warn the Metropolitan Police against exaggeration before Police Magistrates a great deal would be gained.

MR. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne) said, he quite agreed with the hon. Member for Bethnal Green (Mr. Howell) that it was of great importance that policemen should give their evidence carefully, and with a due sense of responsibility. The hon. Gentleman's experience, no doubt—[*A laugh.*]—Perhaps he ought not to say that. The hon. Gentleman had not given his experience of the police; but had merely narrated one anecdote of a married lady who seemed to have fallen under the suspicion of an odd policeman. But he was sure the hon. Gentleman would agree with him that, as a rule, the way in which police-constables gave their evidence was very highly creditable to them. His (Mr. Addison's) experience had been a very extensive one. He had come across the police as often as most Members, but he had always found that they had been strong in their duty. In Courts of Justice he had been amazed at the fairness with which, as a rule, constables gave their evidence; he did not think that any other body of men, even a body of young curates, could give their evidence better. He was very astonished at one remark which was made by the hon. Member for Bethnal Green. The hon. Gentleman said that a policeman ought to be so careful about the truth that, if possible, he ought to tell a little less than the truth.

MR. HOWELL said, he stated that police constables ought rather to give less than the truth than more than the truth.

MR. ADDISON: Rather less than more than the truth. He only remembered one occasion on which he heard a similar remark, and that was some years ago. Having reason to doubt the evidence which it was suggested to him would be given by a young gentleman, the young gentleman's father, a very respectable Hebrew, said—"Oh, you need not fear, Mr. Addison, as to what this gentleman will say. I have brought him up so carefully to tell the truth that he would rather, if possible, go on the other side." He hoped, however, that the police would not altogether bear in mind the admonition of the hon. Member, but would be careful to speak the whole truth, nothing but the truth, and the entire body of the truth. The hon. Member had also stated that it was an unwise thing for decisions of the Bench to be reviewed by the Chief Commissioner of Police in the Metropolis. He quite agreed with that view, and he agreed that if this could be fairly called revising the decisions of the Bench there would be a great deal of force in the last words of the hon. Member's (Mr. Pickergill's) Motion, namely:—

> "That such a course must tend to produce a most prejudicial effect by weakening the authority of the magistrate over the police within his jurisdiction."

But, whilst he was quite of that opinion in theory, he thought in practice there was a great deal to be said on the other side. He might point out to the House another growing evil which tended very much to weaken the authority of Judges. He desired to speak with all respect of his learned Friend, Mr. Baggallay. No one was better pleased than he was when he heard that Mr. Baggallay had obtained promotion at the hands of the Home Secretary. But Mr. Baggallay in doing what he did, though he did not go very far, was following the example which was too often set in Courts of Justice by Judges even more distinguished and occupying higher positions than his (Mr. Baggallay's) own, and it was this—that instead of confining themselves simply to deciding the cases which were before them, after listening to them with that impartial care and attention which they ought to give, they were in the habit of making speeches in which they thought it right to bestow praise or blame, condemnation or approval, upon the witnesses who appeared before them. In this particular matter no one could have questioned the decision of Mr. Baggallay if he had simply given that decision and said nothing more, but he thought it right to go out of his way to express his opinion of the conduct and the evidence of the policeman Bloy. Mr. Baggallay said that he could not believe a word that the policeman said. That being so, the Chief Commissioner had a duty forced upon him. Sir Charles Warren was told that a member of his force was a person who could not be believed at all. What was he to do? Why, the only thing he could do thereupon was to institute some sort of an inquiry. He (Mr. Addison) appealed to hon. Members as to what they would do supposing they were in a similar position. Supposing some servant girl, someone connected with them, had occasion to appear as a witness in a Police Court, and the magistrate, going beyond the decision in the case, which probably no one would question, said—"This is a person unworthy to be in respectable employment," would not hon. Members have held some sort of an inquiry, to see whether there was any foundation for the statement of the magistrate? All the Chief Commissioner had done was his duty. It was a duty he could not shirk. He was compelled to do it. No one suggested he did it improperly or partially; no one suggested that he did not take all the means within his power to arrive at the truth—that, in fact, he did not make an honest inquiry. Having made an honest inquiry, he came to a decision in favour of the policeman. He had before him materials of knowledge and means of ascertaining the policeman's character in general which probably the magistrate had not. If the Chief Commissioner's opinion was couched in terms at all disrespectful to Mr. Baggallay, then they knew that an ample apology was made. The hon. Member for Bethnal Green (Mr. Howell) suggested that part of the evidence in the case was that the policeman had known the girl for years, whereas he had only known her for four months. Anyone who had been in Courts of Justice knew that nothing was more common than for a witness to be confused as to time and dates. He (Mr. Addison) might, if he were asked, say he had had the pleasure of knowing hon. Members of the House five years—whereas it might be 10 years—and very probably, if that fact were called to his attention, he should say—"Bless my soul, how quickly time has passed." Sometimes witnesses said what was not exactly what they meant, and it was quite possible for a policeman to get a wrong impression of matters. Mr. Baggallay, upon imperfect information, came to one view of the evidence before him, and the Commissioner, who was compelled to institute some inquiry, came to another view. In common fairness and honesty to the policeman, the Chief Commissioner could not do more than say—"So far as my inquiry has gone, I think that a mistake has been made, and you are an honest man." Was not that a right thing to do? That was really the sum and substance of this matter. The Chief Commissioner discharged a duty which the observations of the magistrate compelled him to discharge; but he in no way constituted himself a Court of Appeal. No one said that Sir Charles Warren had discharged the duty dishonestly; but, on the contrary, they had the Home Secretary stating that his inquiries proved to him that the Chief Commissioner had done everything that was right. Under these circumstances, he (Mr. Addison) was glad to find that the police were in the right. One was always glad to find that the police discharged their duties well. If there was a black sheep amongst them he ought to be punished. They ought to be glad there were few black sheep amongst the police, and that the particular person concerned in this case had turned out not to be one of them, but that he had every right to enjoy the confidence of the community.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) said, that the facts of the case were very simple, and there was no dispute about them. He regarded the question as one of internal discipline in the Police Force. The Chief Commissioner, in the exercise of his duty, instituted not a judicial, but a disciplinary inquiry into the conduct of the police-constable, and no blame could be attached to Sir Charles Warren for holding such an inquiry. But then there came the publication of the Chief Commissioner's decision, which was practically a reflection on the decision of the Judge. There were two principles which they must bear in mind—first, that an inquiry of this kind was not, and could not, be that of a Court of Appeal from any properly constituted tribunal; and, secondly, the House must be very careful to preserve the very broad line of distinction between the judicial and the executive with reference to police matters. He thought that the Home Secretary had met the case very fairly, admitting that Sir Charles Warren had committed an error of taste and judgment. Sir Charles Warren had also practically apologized through the Home Secretary to the magistrate for what he had done. He therefore asked the hon. Member to consider that his Motion was, practically, a very grave and serious censure of the House of Commons. If the Resolution was passed, Sir Charles Warren must send in his resignation to-morrow morning. He contended that the censures of the House of Commons on public officials ought not to be pronounced on light grounds. Having, therefore, heard the statement of the Home Secretary, he asked the hon. Member whether he would not be satisfied with the judgment which the right hon. Gentleman had pronounced, resting assured that an error of this kind would not occur again. He suggested that the hon. Member should withdraw his Motion.

Mr. PICKERSGILL said, he desired to correct a statement which had been made by the Home Secretary. The right hon. Gentleman had blamed him for not taking the trouble to ascertain the terms of the Memorandum. Now, on the 13th of February last, he asked the right hon. Gentleman to lay a copy of the Memorandum on the Table of the House; but his reply was that it was not usual, and that he did not think it would be to the public advantage to lay the documents on the Table.

Mr. MATTHEWS said, that what the hon. Gentleman asked for was the Correspondence.

Mr. PICKERSGILL said, he asked for a copy of the Memorandum and for the Correspondence. He did not receive any intimation from the right hon. Gentleman that there would be no objection to lay the Memorandum on the Table. He certainly thought that at that time the right hon. Gentleman had decided objections to lay the Memorandum on the Table. However, an appeal had been made to him, an appeal to which he was not unwilling to respond. He thought he had, at all events, succeeded in eliciting from the Home Secretary a stronger expression of opinion with regard to the action of Sir Charles Warren than any previously made in the House of Commons; and he only desired, by the indulgence of the House, to add a very few words more. On the 13th of February, according to the right hon. Gentleman's statement in the House, only police witnesses had been examined in this matter. It appeared that subsequently independent witnesses were examined; but for the life of him he could not understand how testimony, however valuable in itself, obtained subsequently to the 13th of February, could in any way affect the propriety of a step which was taken on the 29th of January.

Motion for Previous Question and Original Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

WORKMEN (WOOLWICH AND ENFIELD).

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Colonel HUGHES (Woolwich) said, he rose to call attention to the case of workmen entered in the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, and at Enfield, between the 17th day of December, 1861, and the 4th day of June, 1870, and to move—

> "That a Select Committee of Seven Members be appointed to inquire into and report on the circumstances under which workmen entered in the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, and Enfield, and other Government establishments, between the 17th day of December, 1861, and the 4th day of June, 1870, have hitherto been refused the benefit of 'The Superannuation Act, 1859,' and 'The Superannuation Amendment Act, 1873,' and subsequent Amendment Acts, and particularly whether it was in the year 1870 that they were for the first time informed that a War Office Circular of the 17th day of December, 1861, had assumed to suspend 'The Superannuation Act, 1859,' so far as these men were concerned, and as to whether they are or ought to be within the benefits of the said Act of 1873; that the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records; that Three be the quorum; that Colonel Duncan, Mr. O. V. Morgan, Viscount Folkestone, Mr. Howell, Mr. Boord, Mr. Bradlaugh, and Colonel Hughes be the Members of the said Committee."

His Motion affected the working classes, and he had hoped that the Government would have consented to the inquiry he proposed. The six Members of the House, with himself, whom he proposed as a Committee of Inquiry, could have gathered information which the Government might have used or might have rejected at their pleasure. He understood that the Government would not consent to have a Committee of Inquiry at all; but he hoped that their opinion would be modified by the time he had concluded his observations. The artizans and labourers at Woolwich and Enfield, and other Government establishments, were entitled to pensions under the old Ordnance scale, after 15 years' service. Labourers of every description had £10 a-year after 15 years' service, and £15 a-year after 20 years' service. The Act of 1857 abolished the abatement which had previously taken place where men had pensions. To prove that these men were a class entitled to pension, it would be found on page 704 of volume 146 of *Hansard* that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in 1857, stated in the House that the pensions granted to artificers of the Navy and Ordnance amounted at that time to £74,700 per annum. In 1859 the Superannuation Act of that year was discussed as a Bill, and the Member for Greenwich, which place then included Woolwich, said he hoped the Bill was so framed as to include within its scope artizans and labourers employed in the Government establishments. Lord Iddesleigh, then Sir Stafford Northcote, said the Act would extend to all persons in the Public Service. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), speaking on the 18th of March, 1859, said—

> "They were enacting now that which would not take full effect for the next 40 or 50 years; and they were now entering into a new set of engagements, every one of which, even if it reached over half-a-century or more, must be kept absolutely sacred, however onerous might be the consequences."—(3 *Hansard*, [153] 365.)

"However onerous might be the consequences" were very weighty words. He (Colonel Hughes) alleged that in this particular case the engagement of the Government had not been kept, and he would presently explain why. He believed that successive Secretaries of State had investigated these cases in a very perfunctory manner, being guided almost entirely by the permanent officials. He made an exception, however, in the case of the present Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope), because he believed the right hon. Gentleman had given more attention to the case than all the other Secretaries of State who had preceded him, and he had many times been in hope that the right hon. Gentleman would have granted a Committee of Inquiry. But it appeared that the right hon. Gentleman, after further consultation with the permanent officials, had gone back to the old beaten track, and had said "No," when, in his (Colonel Hughes) opinion, the evidence was of such a nature that he ought to have said "Yes." There were originally three contentions against the men. The first was that they were not included in the Superannuation Act of 1859. Sir Stafford Northcote said, in 1859, that the Act of 1834 gave superannuation allowances to those officers only who were within the Schedule of 1834, whereas the Bill of 1859 would extend superannuation allowances to all persons in the Public Service, the abatements having been abolished. Colonel Sykes, then a Member of the House, said that—

> "Although an economist, and anxious to save the public money, he was bound at the same time to be just, and, therefore, he should support the Bill. The higher servants of the Crown were able to provide for their old age out of their salaries, but the lower class could not do so, and if they were permanent servants it was the duty of the State to do that for them which they could not do for themselves."—(*Ibid.* 369.)

With respect to the same Bill, Mr. Wilson, then Member for Devonport, wrote, under date of 19th February, 1859, to Mr. R. B. Oram, of Devonport, informing him that these words had been inserted in the Bill—

> "Whether their remuneration be computed by day pay, weekly wages, or annual salary,"

in order, as Mr. Wilson said, to show that all classes — labourers, artificers, and officers—were alike included. He (Mr. Wilson) further said—

> "The whole of the Public Service would be placed on precisely the same footing, and full effect would be given to the doctrine for which he had always contended since it was proposed to abolish the abatements, which was the only pretext for any distinction before;"

and he concluded—

> "That he sent that explanation, thinking Mr. Oram might have many inquiries on the subject, and in order to enable him to answer them."

He (Colonel Hughes) would leave that part of the subject, and hoped he had proved it up to the hilt that artificers and labourers were included in the Act of 1859. The second contention against the men was that after 1859 they must get the certificate mentioned in the Act of 1859. That certificate was described in the debate at the time as a certificate of age and medical fitness.

No certificate, as they understood a certificate now, would make blacksmiths or carpenters better workmen. Sir Stafford Northcote said—

> "In reference to the examination of the men by the Civil Service Commissioner, he had to state that it was absolutely necessary for the men to obtain certificates as to their age, the state of their health, and other such matters as were elements in the calculation of their superannuation."—(*Ibid.* 377.)

But it was the duty of those who engaged the men to see that their entry was in every respect complete. Now, the men who entered after 1859 obtained the same wages as those who were employed before that; and there had been no distinction in wages between one class and another from that time down to the present. There were printed regulations in these Government establishments by which workmen were bound, and there was nothing stated in the regulations with regard to the superannuations being abolished. There was nothing posted up in the workshops with regard to any intention of abolishing superannuations. On the contrary, men were being superannuated every day as occasion arose. At length they came to the year 1870, when a workman, named Weaver, who was then retiring, claimed his superannuation allowance, although he had entered after 1859. The officials of the Department where he was employed drafted the letter of application which he sent in.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members not being present,

House adjourned at Twenty minutes before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 21st March, 1888.

MINUTES.]—Private Bill (*by Order*)—*Second Reading*—South Eastern Railway.

Public Bills—*First Reading*—Statute Law Revision * [186].

Second Reading—Land Law (Ireland) Acts Amendment [1], *negatived.*

Committee—Report—Consolidated Fund (No. 1).*

Committee — Report — Considered as amended—National Debt (Conversion) * [164].

Colonel Hughes

QUESTIONS.

IRELAND—ROAD CONTRACTORS—TIPPERARY, N.R.

Mr. P. J. O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the moneys earned by the road contractors in the North Riding of the County of Tipperary for a period of eight months came due at the recent Assizes at Nenagh on the 5th and 6th instants, when, as usual, cheques for payment should be issued; whether these contractors, numbering over 500, mostly poor men, are yet unpaid; whether many of them reside at a distance of 20 miles from Nenagh, where they have had to come applying for their money; and, whether complaints have reached him that this is owing to the neglect of "the Clerk of the Crown and Peace" in not signing the cheques duly certified for; and, if so, whether he will have instructions issued to that official to have the payments made without further delay?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.), in reply, said, he had been unable to obtain the necessary information, and he must ask the hon. Gentleman to be good enough to give him a little longer Notice.

Mr. P. J. O'BRIEN said, the Question had been on the Paper four or five days.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR replied, that the hon. Member was aware that it was unusual to put down Questions for a Wednesday's Sitting, and it was also very inconvenient.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Ordered, That the Committee on the Consolidated Fund Bill (No. 1) and the Consideration of the National Debt (Conversion) Bill, as amended, have precedence of the Orders of the Day subsequent to the Land Law (Ireland) Acts Amendment Bill; and that so much of the Standing Orders, "Sittings of the House," as relates to the interruption of Business, and the Adjournment of the House at half-past Five, and at Six o'clock, be suspended during To-day's Sitting, until the proceedings on the Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill and the National Debt (Conversion) Bill are concluded.—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—[BILL 1.]

(*Mr. Parnell, Mr. Justin M'Carthy, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Dillon, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. PARNELL (Cork), in rising to move, that the Bill be now read a second time, said: In doing so it will be unnecessary for me to occupy the time of the House at any great length with the introduction of this matter, because in the discussions which we have had previously during this and other Sessions upon this most important and vital question we have been gradually narrowing the area of the dispute and reducing the proposals to one or two definite points of distinction or difference. We have now before us practically two methods of dealing with this question. We have the method proposed by the hon. and learned Member for Inverness (Mr. Finlay) last Session during the discussions upon the Land Law (Ireland) Amendment Bill, and the position taken up by the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) and reduced by him to the shape of a Bill this Session, and also taken up by myself and proposed in the Bill which I now ask the House to read a second time. We also have the method proposed by the Government last Session—rejected by us last Session for reasons then given, and which I shall repeat again now in detail—a method which is foreshadowed by an Amendment placed, I believe, on the Paper at short Notice. —the Amendment by the hon. Member for South Birmingham (Mr. Powell-Williams), who proposes as a solution for this question the general bankruptcy of the Irish tenants. Nothing that has happened since last Session has induced us to alter our minds in the slightest respect with regard to this bankruptcy proposal. It was one, however, which we fully considered then—which we anxiously and earnestly considered with every desire to meet the views of the Government, and which, after full consideration, we rejected as impossible and most inequitable, and likely to lead to the most disastrous consequences. What, then, remained? There remained the proposal which I shall submit in the Bill, which is the proposal of the hon. and learned Member for Inverness and of the hon. Member for South Tyrone; and there also remained what I may call the Scotch precedent—that is, that we should depart from the foundation laid in the Act of last Session and adopt an entirely different manner in dealing with arrears—namely, to give the Land Commission power to deal with those arrears, as was done in the case of the Scottish crofters. I rejected that proposal, because I desired above all things that the proposal which I was to submit to the House should be a moderate one, and that there should be no excuse whatever for its rejection. I should have preferred, undoubtedly, the Scotch proposal. There are questions connected with the constitution of the County Courts in Ireland, and especially with the constitution of some of them, which render it impossible for us to look with much hope to the action of some of those tribunals in regard to this question; but taking them as a whole, I came to the conclusion that it would be right for me not to depart from the foundation which was laid for us by the Act of last Session in the 30th section of the Act, that it would be better for us to build upon that foundation rather than to lay down one entirely new, so that we should have a better chance of inducing the House of Commons to accede to an addition to the 30th section of the Act of last year, an addition which was then urged by the hon. and learned Member for Inverness, and an addition which we hope, taking it as a whole, will afford practical and very large relief to the majority of the Irish tenants as regards this question of arrears. I have taken this 30th section as a foundation, and I have built upon it the structure of the Bill, which I want the House to give a favourable hearing to. The 30th section of the Act of last Session provided, as the House remembers, that the Courts in which the proceedings against tenants were taken for non-payment of rent and also for any debts should have the power, within the limitation of £50 valuation, to postpone the execution of the decree if cause were shown, and also to spread the debt over such period as they thought proper by instalments. I ask the House to go a step further, and to give the Court the additional power of reducing these debts in the case of rent, of reducing the cost in such proportion as they may think proper. The Act of last Session, in its 30th section, was confined, as I have said, to £50 valuation. I ask the House to extend that limit from £50 to £100, in order to meet the cases of leaseholders who are entirely shut out from the equitable provisions of that section—or at least very largely shut out—owing to that limitation, the great majority of leaseholders having a valuation of over £50. I also ask for an extension in the provisions in the 30th section to the case of civil bills for the recovery of rent, Section 30 being limited as regards rent to cases of ejectment, the power of spreading instalments over a certain period being limited to cases of ejectment. I have introduced a limitation into my Bill which does not exist in the Act of last Session. I have limited the effect of my Bill to cases of rent; but I am willing—if it should seem proper to the House, and in view of those who support the Amendment which has been placed upon the Paper by the hon. Member for South Birmingham—to meet that Amendment, so far as I reasonably can, to forego that limitation, and to extend my Bill, if it reaches Committee, to all cases which are covered by Section 30 of the Act of last year. There are some supplementary provisions of minor importance in this Bill. There is the provision for the extension of time for redemption within three months after the passing of the Act, in case the six months period of redemption allowed by the Act of last Session shall have expired before its passing. This, I think, is a reasonable provision. It is not one of very great magnitude, nor of extensive application, but it is one which, if the other portions of my Bill commend themselves to the House, will undoubtedly be thought satisfactory, because it provides that the tenant whose period of redemption has expired—owing to the operation of the 7th section of the Act of last Session—shall have the advantages offered by the provisions of this Bill. Then it also gives power to the Court where a judgment or decree has been recovered prior to the passing of the Act to reduce the amount of arrears and costs—that is to say, allowing the Court on this question of arrears to go back on its judgment, and bring it into accordance with the principle of the Bill. These are the main provisions of this Bill; in effect, the entire provisions. It is one which I recommend to the House on account of the present situation in Ireland. We know not what that situation may be. We are now at the end of the term of respite afforded by the operation of the 7th section of the Act of 1887. That 7th section provided the substitution of notice of eviction for the actual carrying out of the eviction of the tenants. It provided that no ejectment should be actually carried out for a period of six months. It, therefore, afforded a temporary respite from actual ejectment to the Irish tenants. That temporary respite for the Irish tenant is exemplified by the fact that, whereas in the quarter ending September, 1887, the number of evictions was 4,195; in the quarter ending December, 1887, when this 7th section had come into operation, the number of evictions was only 550, or, roughly speaking, a proportion of one in eight of what they had been in the previous quarter These evictions, the House will bear in mind, have not been stopped or prevented. They have only been postponed or suspended, and looking at another Return I find that in the same quarter, the quarter ending December 31st, 1887, when the evictions were reduced by the operation of the 7th section to 550 from 4,195 in the preceding quarter, the alarming number of 3,352 notices of eviction were served. I ask the House to consider what is to become of those 3,352 notices of eviction, served, mind you, up to the end of last year? We have no information, no Return as to the number of eviction notices which have been served since; but we may assume that they amount, at least, to another 3,000. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) has any information in his possession with regard to this matter; but I think if he had the information in his possession it should have been laid upon the Table of the House before the second reading of the Bill. I will assume, in the absence of any contradiction by the right hon. Gentleman, by analogy with the result of the working of Section 7 of the Act during the quarter ending last year, that there have been up to date upwards of 5,000 or 6,000 notices of eviction served under the operation of that section. This is a very alarming prospect, and I ask the House to consider what is likely to result when these notices of eviction come to be put in force. You have had a respite from agrarian agitation and trouble in Ireland during the winter, largely owing to the effects of that section; but I say it again to the House that it is only a respite, and that, failing some extension of the provision of the 30th Section of the Act of last year, you are bound to be plunged into a sea of trouble and confusion and disaster in Ireland, the results of which no man can foresee. What is the remedy proposed by the Government? There have been rumours that they are going to adopt the Amendment of the hon. Member for South Birmingham (Mr. Powell-Williams). This Amendment—which has been placed upon the Paper at the last moment—it is rumoured is to be adopted by the Government as the plank upon which they may sit to ride over this stormy sea in Ireland. Well, Sir, I think if any action was to be taken, it should have been taken by the Government in the form of a Bill, and not in the form of an Amendment to the second reading of a Bill, the only result of which, if successful, will be to throw out the only proposal in the shape of a Bill the House has before it. This is a pressing question, and it needs immediate action. The greatest trouble in connection with all your attempts to deal with this Land Question has been that you have always been too late—sometimes by 10 years, sometimes by two years, and sometimes by one year. In 1885 I asked the House to abate judicial rents, and the House refused. But a year later, the House, on the proposal of the Government, abated those rents; but they were too late, for meanwhile this load of arrears had accumulated—arrears that by your Act of abatement you admitted to be excessive. We are told that we must deal with the question of the abatement of rents or arrears of rents to the landlords on the same footing as with the other debts due by the tenants, but the question of rent by your own legislation, repeated over and over again, has been placed upon an entirely different footing. Since the Devon Commission sat 30 or 40 years ago the House has been engaged in constant attempts to fetter the action of the Irish landlords against their tenants. But has the House ever found it necessary to fetter the action of any other creditors besides the landlords? The necessity has not been urged, it has not been maintained, much less has it been proved. The necessity with regard to the landlords has been shown to exist in every year by numerous Acts of Parliament and by the impossibility of maintaining any sort of settled government in Ireland owing to the way in which the landlords had exercised their rights over their tenants. Now, Sir, it is absurd, it is monstrous, to attempt to set up an analogy between the two classes of the tenants' creditors. The analogy does not exist. In the first place, it has never been proved that the debts due by the tenants to the shopkeepers are excessive. It has been proved in the case of the rents by the action of the Legislature. In the second place, it is evident that this class of creditors—the shopkeepers—have not been pressing for a settlement. It is not alleged that any difficulty exists between the tenants and the shopkeepers; that any large processes have been served; and I believe in no case, or in very few cases, have the tenants lost their interest in their holdings and the shelter of their rooftrees owing to the action of this class of creditors. Nay, more than this; if you adopt the suggestion made by the Government of last Session, and now fathered by the hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham—if you adopt that suggestion, when the next period of scarcity comes on the West of Ireland, the result will be the absolute starvation of thousands of people. At present, on the recurrence of those periods of scarcity, the only barrier between the small holders in the West of Ireland and actual starvation is the forbearance of the shopkeepers—those men against whom you are now invited to take penal action, and who are absolutely the only people who support these poor peasants in those seasons of scarcity. They give them credit—they give them food, in their sore need, on credit; but if you plunge the whole country into bankruptcy, you destroy this assistance and the credit of those poor people. Now, Sir, I think I have said enough prior to the moving of the Amendment of the hon. Member for South Birmingham on this question of the bankruptcy proposal. Speaking for myself personally, I earnestly wish that it had been possible to have adopted such a proposal; but I long since came to the deliberate conclusion that it would be most unjust to the shopkeepers, that it would ruin the credit of the tenant farmers themselves, and it would tend to the destruction by famine —on occasions of periodical scarcity— of many thousand of small occupiers. I greatly regret that under these circumstances it is impossible for us to meet such a proposal with anything but the most absolute hostility. I now ask the House, are you going again to fly in the face of the advice which is given you by every popular Representative in Ireland —from the hon. Member for South Tyrone and the hon. Member for South Derry (Mr. T. W. Russell and Mr. Lea) the representatives of the Presbyterians of the North of Ireland, to the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), who represents a larger constituency, in addition to that part of the county he represents here? Well, Sir, if you do so, upon your own heads be the result. I have endeavoured to draw this Bill as moderately as it is possible to draw it. If you will point out any checks or any precautions that can be put into it in addition to those already existing, any limitations, any reasonable limitations, I shall—should the Bill reach Committee—be only too glad to consider them, and if they do not affect the main purpose of the Bill, to adopt them. If you say that there ought to be limitations as regards the duration of this Bill, I will agree to them. I think the limitation of two years would be a reasonable one, and I should be happy to adopt such a suggestion in Committee if the Bill reached that stage; but unless you are prepared yourselves to afford some effectual solution to this question, I should ask you to pause before you shut the door in the face of these unfortunate people. The Land Question is a good illustration, a very good illustration for us, and such action —if hostile action is taken against this Bill to-day—is the best argument we could have in England, in Ireland, everywhere, in favour of the restoration of a Parliament for Ireland. It is an excellent illustration of the impossibility of governing Ireland from Westminster by the votes of English Members, under the direction of English public opinion. Your muddling and messing with this Land Question is the best illustration we could have. You say "the Irish Land Question is the whole of the Irish Question," but if you think so, why do not you take it up? Why do not you take it hand earnestly and conclude the question? You say to us, "But you are always bringing forward the Land Question. Why do not you move an abstract resolution in favour of Home Rule?" Well, Sir, I used to see the fate of such abstract resolutions in favour of Home Rule 10 or 12 years ago, when those annual Motions were moved by the late Mr. Isaac Butt, and when the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Thanet Division of Kent (Colonel King-Harman) used to second them, and I prefer practical illustrations and examples. But at the same time I should feel very glad if the great Unionist Party would deprive me of those practical illustrations, and I invite them to do so. How is it you cannot settle the Irish Land Question? In the first place you know nothing at all about it. You go to Birmingham for your guides and preceptors, instead of to Cork or to Tyrone. It is evident from the attitude of the hon. Members I have referred to that they detect danger to the Union perhaps in this proposal, but I think that point has not yet been raised against the necessity of dealing in an effective way with the settlement of the arrears question. But if there be no danger to the Union, of what is it that you are afraid? I invite the House to cast away this fear, and to weigh this Bill, and to deal candidly with this branch of the subject for once in their life, and I assure them that they will be amply repaid by the result. But I cannot promise them that the claim they demand of Ireland for self-government will be lessened in its intensity. It may be easier for you under such circumstances, with this agrarian question settled, to perform the first duties of Government, but it will never be possible for you, no matter how much you settle the Irish Land Question, to govern Ireland with the consent of the people. You will always have her people arrayed in hostility against any attempt to deprive her in perpetuity of those rights which were given to her in 1782; and I believe that if to-morrow the Irish Land Question were settled upon the most absolutely fair basis, that it would in no respect diminish the strength of our claim for the restitution of our Irish Parliament. I am therefore not afraid of seeing full justice done to Ireland in Westminster. I invite you by all means to try it, and you will find that neither I nor any of my hon. Friends by word, deed, or action will interfere to prevent your trials from having their fullest, freest, and their best effect. In conclusion, Sir, I have to recommend this Bill to the House on the ground of its moderation, on the ground of the urgent necessity of the case—an urgency which I very much fear the next few weeks, certainly the next few months, will amply disclose—and also finally, upon the ground of the absence of the slightest effort to offer any other tangible solution which the Irish people, and the great majority of their Representatives, can possibly accept. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Parnell.*)

MR. POWELL-WILLIAMS (Birmingham, S.), in rising to move as an Amendment the omission of all the words after the word "That," in order to add—

> "No Bill providing for a composition of arrears of rent in Ireland will be satisfactory to this House, and effectual for the relief of the tenants, which does not, at the same time deal with their debts to other creditors besides the landlords,"

said, that the question, as the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) had shown, although a very important one, was comprised in very narrow limits, and could be concisely dealt with. With what object had the hon. Member for Cork introduced the Bill? It was obvious from his speech, and from other considerations, that it was in order to keep the tenant upon his holding and prevent him, if possible, from being excluded from it. If that were the object of the hon. Member, then in his judgment the measure absolutely failed to effect the object the hon. Member had in view. It was for that reason that he (Mr. Powell-Williams) had placed his Amendment upon the Paper. The hon. Member for Cork, in the course of his address, offered to make the same concession that he had offered to make on a previous occasion, but it was a concession which did not appear to him to be satisfactory. The concession was that, whereas the landlord was compulsorily brought into the Court in order that a settlement of his debt might be effected, no other creditors of the tenant should be compulsorily brought in. [*Cries of* "No!"] That was, as he understood it, the legal effect of the concession offered by the hon. Member, and would be the effect of the alteration the hon. Member proposed in the clause. Now, he thought that if one creditor was compelled to come into Court the other creditors should also be compelled to come into Court. It was clear that unless compulsion was put upon all classes of creditors, some would never come into Court so long as they saw security for their debts increasing day by day. He supposed they might take it for granted that everything which the tenant possessed—his tenant right, his stock, and the implements with which he carried on his farm, were ultimately accountable for his debts, assuming that there were no other means of discharging them. If that were so, what was the use of relieving the tenant from the danger which threatened him from the landlord if he were left entirely open to the danger which threatened him from the gombeen man and the money-lender? [*Cries of* "Oh!"] Of course hon. Members from Ireland would not agree with what he was saying. It had been intimated by the hon. Member for Cork that the debts of the tenants were of two descriptions—that there were just debts and that there were unjust debts. Assuming that that was so—that one-half of the responsibility was just, and that the other was unjust—he would ask the House what earthly difference it made if they wished to protect the tenant upon his holding? A just debt was just as good as an unjust debt if they simply wanted to make use of it for the purpose of selling up the tenant. They were both debts; both entailed the consequences of debts, and if the law allowed their collection, the question whether they were just or unjust did not come in. They might relieve the tenant from the unjust part and still prevent him from being able to retain his holding and discharge the obligations he had contracted because of the just part which they did not propose to touch. He maintained that if Parliament interfered at all in the matter, and he was free to confess that he thought it ought to interfere—if it interfered at all it should do so effectually and in a manner to secure the tenant from every danger from whatever quarter it was threatened. After all, this line between a just and unjust debt was possibly an imaginary one. At any rate he felt indisposed to draw it too sharply. It had been said that the landlord had had an unjust share of the profits in his dealings with the Irish tenants, and that, therefore, a large portion of the arrears that had accummulated were arrears for which the tenants were not morally responsible. Had the money-lender in Ireland and the gombeen man had no unjust proportion of the profits in their dealings with the Irish tenants? All he had to say about that matter was this—if the money-lenders of Ireland were not accustomed to take an unjust share of the profits upon their transactions, then Ireland was a paradise which the impecunious Englishman had not hitherto had revealed to him. He maintained, therefore, that the effect of the Bill would be unjust. It would tend in one direction to relieve an unjust debt, while it would have the effect of making an unjust debt in another direction more secure. If that were so, he put it to the House, whether a Bill as it was drawn by the hon. Member for the City of Cork was not a Bill that would operate quite as much for the benefit of the gombeen man and the money-lender as it would for the relief of the debtor. It was said that the Irish tenant was deterred from going into Court and from having his just rent fixed in consequence of the danger hanging over him from undischarged arrears of rent, and that, therefore, he was obliged to go on paying an unjust debt for an indefinite period, or, at any rate, was obliged to incur an unjust responsibility, because he (Mr. Powell-Williams) took it that, as things went now, the tenant did not actually pay. If the tenant went into Court and got his rent abated and went on with his tenancy under new and favourable conditions, what advantage would it really be to him if he were liable to be sold up by some creditor other than the landlord? That was a strong point in favour of legislation of some kind, but not in favour of this Bill. When the obligation and the sacredness of contract came again to be asserted in Ireland, no earthly power could prevent a man who had a legal debt from coming into Court and pressing it against a debtor, notwithstanding the fact that the result of doing so would be that the debtor would be sold up and turned out of his holding. The Bill, therefore, as it stood, would only, after all, partly relieve the tenant from his debts, and would simply be an incomplete relief to him. The only way in which he could be completely rescued from his embarrassments, and be on a solvent and solid footing, was to deal with all his debts alike. He had heard it stated and argued that a landlord ought not to object to have the rent abated, or the debt due to him entirely swept away, because it must be regarded as absolutely irrecoverable—that it was only represented by an entry in a book, and that after all it was nothing more or less than a bad debt. If that were the case, and he believed that was the view taken by hon. Members who represented Ireland, it was a strong argument in favour of his Amendment, because if the landlord's debt was absolutely irrecoverable, the debts of the gombeen man and of the money-lender were irrecoverable too, and if the one ought to be swept clean away, the other ought to be swept clean away also. The tenants knew this—at least many of them did—and there were not wanting indications last year that not a few of them were willing to accept the proposal of the Government, that the whole of the debts of the tenants should be dealt with alike, and be placed upon an equal footing. What was wanted was this—that when a fair rent had once been fixed, and when the tenant was upon his holding under new and more favourable conditions he should remain upon the holding, and that the relationship between him and the landlord should not be liable to any sudden disturbance. What was necessary was that the dangers which beset the tenant on his holding should be cleared away, and that he should be released from his position of indebtedness, notwithstanding that some part of that indebtedness might be just and another part unjust. Unless he were relieved from debts of every kind, there would be a millstone round his neck which would prevent him from cultivating his holding with profit to himself and with advantage to the landlord. It was with a view of placing the tenant in a more favourable position, and of making a clean sweep for him of all his responsibility, enabling him in future to fulfil the conditions of his tenancy, that he begged to move the Amendment of which he had given Notice.

VISCOUNT **EBRINGTON** (Devon, Tavistock) said, he rose for the purpose of seconding the Amendment, and he did so because he thought that the proposals contained in the Bill of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) either went too far or not far enough. If it were designed only to make the 30th section of the Act of last year fulfil the intentions of Parliament, and do that which he believed every Member of that House thought it should do—namely, effectually prevent evictions taking place when the tenant's difficulties did not arise from his own conduct, act, or default—then, though he was sure the object would have the sympathy of all parts of the House, the Bill went very much too far. If, on the other hand, it was designed to set weak tenants on their legs, to restore to insolvent farmers the power of carrying on their business with advantage, both to themselves and to the community, then it did not go anything like far enough. The case for the Bill rested mainly, as he understood it, on the fact that a considerable number of ejectment notices had been taken out, or threatened on account of arrears of rent which either had been reduced, or would be reduced if the tenants could go into Court; and it was assumed, in the first place, that if the present rents were unfairly high for the times, the arrears were consequently unjust and unfair likewise; and, secondly, it was assumed also that the tenant's debt to his landlord stood on a different footing from any of his other obligations. Now, he submitted that it was entirely begging the question to take either of those propositions for granted. In the first place, the House would remember that an Arrears Act was passed in 1882, which whitewashed the great bulk of the tenants under £30 valuation in Ireland—more than two-thirds of the whole number—and gave them the chance of settling their arrears and getting a judicial rent fixed afterwards. Again, the fact that a farm was not worth a certain rent now was no proof whatever that it was not worth much more two or three years ago. There were hundreds of acres of wheat land in the East of England which were not worth 5*s.* an acre now, where they were worth formerly 25*s.* per acre; nor was that fact a proof that 25*s.* was too high a rent then, or that the higher rent was not more easily paid then than the lower rent now. He would put another case. Even two years ago the price of corn was higher than at present, but if a man bought a truck-load of oats from a farmer two years ago and had not paid him until now, would he be justified in tendering him no more than the present price? If this was inequitable for one kind of merchandize, why should it be equitable for another commodity, especially when the price of that commodity had been in the great majority of cases fixed between the parties by the State. Again it was stated, and especially by his hon. Friend the Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell), that arrears even of judicial rent stood on a different footing to other obligations, because the State had, for reasons which he did not question, interfered already between landlord and tenant; and his hon. Friend argued that though they might justly compel one creditor to accept a compromise, it was not fair to call on tradesmen who had supplied the necessaries of life to do the same. His hon. Friend accepted that representation of the arguments he used the other day, but it introduced a principle which was not recognized, except in the case of minors, by the law of this or any other country. If a man became bankrupt, the baker, the coal merchant, and the chemist, who had supplied bread, fuel, and medicine, had to take their chance and share alike with the publican and the tobacconist; and if this principle of his hon. Friend's was acted on in a practical way, he would like to know if he proposed to apply it only to the traders who had supplied some 4,000 or 5,000 Irish tenants with meal, and that too without inquiring whether the price of the meal was fair or exorbitant. He thought the poor of Dublin and London, not to mention other places, and the bakers and butchers who supplied them, would very soon demand that such privileges should not be restricted to so small a proportion of the population, but that they also should share in the advantages. He did not think the House was likely to adopt this principle; but, even if it did, he contended that there was no guarantee that it would give relief where it was needed. A man who had exhausted his credit and had no assets unencumbered but his labour and his tools, could not do justice to more than an acre or two of an agricultural holding. They might relieve him of one part of his liabilities, they might wipe off his debt to the landlord, but they would not do him much good, and he would be unable to carry on his business properly if he were still left deeply involved with other people. Yet that, unless the testimony of many witnesses was false, was the condition of very many of the Irish tenants in many parts of the country; and their indebtedness was not confined to those who had supplied them with the necessaries of life, but they were very much in the hands of money-lenders and banks, and had been so for years. He would not detain the House too long with quotations, but he would read one or two which had a distinct bearing on the question. He found that Professor Baldwin, as long ago as 1880, told the Duke of Richmond's Commission that a very large section of the tenants throughout Ireland were hopelessly bankrupt; that in many places they owed on an average from three to five years' rent to shopkeepers alone, the average of insolvents in small farm districts being as much as one in six. The Professor stated further that one bank in Mayo had lent £5,000 in £5 bills, and that the Cork butter merchants had lent out nearly £500,000 among the farmers of the adjacent districts, the interest never being less than 10 and sometimes as high as 25 per cent, and that he was sure that there were 100,000 tenants in all in Ireland who were nearly bankrupt. The banks in Kerry, he said, charged the small farmers 10 per cent; and he declared further, question 32,554—

> "In one town a money-lender showed me his books, and by his own admission the interest he charged was 43½ per cent. He had two shops—whisky and grocery; the money-lender is generally a shopkeeper. He had over 100 Petty Sessions decrees for £1 19*s.* 11*d.* ready for execution."

Another witness, the late Dr. Lyons, in the debate on the Arrears Bill in 1882, spoke of the indebtedness of the tenants above £30 as being immensely greater than that of the small ones. More recently, before Lord Cowper's Commission, evidence was given that showed no improvement. Mr. Tyrrel, Clerk of the Peace of the County of Armagh, stated that the county was covered with judgment mortgages. Mr. Wilson, Chairman of the Board of Guardians at Portadown, told the Commission that 75 per cent of the farmers were bankrupt; and Mr. Black, of Antrim, a farmer and linen-merchant, put the proportion of insolvents at one in eight, and handed in a letter containing these words—

> "One money-lender told me lately he could give me a dozen farms he has on bonds."

The hon. Member for Kilkenny (Mr. Marum) told the same Commission that the deposits in banks were more than covered by "floating paper," and that nothing could be more rotten than the financial position of the tenants at present.

Mr. MARUM (Kilkenny, N.) said, he had explained his reasons for arriving at that conclusion.

Viscount EBRINGTON said, that did not alter the fact; and, the hon. Member added, that this was only a sample, and the truth of that statement of the hon. Member's was confirmed by various witnesses from every part of the country. Some hon. Gentlemen might say that they might be interested witnesses, but he would ask the indulgence of the House while he read one more extract from the evidence of Mr. Tuke—a gentleman whose knowledge of the subject and whose disinterestedness were very well known. In examination before the Lords' Committee in 1882, Mr. Tuke gave this evidence, 7722—

> "The shop-keepers, who are the guardians, are bitterly opposed to emigration—though a man worth only £10 or £15 may owe £40 of shop debts, and £30 or £40 rent. They say—'I can get a shilling out of him, and I would rather he should remain here in his poverty than go.'"

He was asked, Question 7788—

> "Therefore any measure, I suppose, which only deals with one class of debts, and not with the other, would still leave the tenant with a heavy weight of debt around him, which he would no more be able to discharge than he would if it had not been touched?"

Mr. Tuke replied—

> "Undoubtedly it would leave him with the shop debt, but my impression is that the trader, looking at this man as a continuous customer, will not come down on him, as was suggested the other night in the House of Commons, and at once sweep the district. His feeling is to keep these people, and get a few shillings out of them."

And he went on to say, Questions 7794 and 7787—

> "The shopkeeper simply hangs on, and does not press for a settlement, as in England. He says—'I shall get sixpence or a shilling out of this man, and I shall be able to sell him a bag of meal at double the price, and get some of the debt back in that way.' I believe that is the argument in their minds. What it wants is a simple insolvent debtors' court, in which rent and shop debts might all be brought in."

He did not suppose that a shopkeeper's nature elsewhere was very different from what it was in Connemara, and he thought the last extract he had read from the evidence of Mr. Tuke threw a good deal of light on the long-suffering and patience and readiness to give time, and not to press for payment, which his hon. Friend the Member for South Tyrone said was the characteristic of the Irish shopkeeper; and it threw a good deal of light also on the willingness of some Irish Members to accept the principle of a simple and expeditious composition last year, provided always that it should not apply to creditors who did not appear in Court. He submitted that he had said enough to prove that the tenants' debts to their landlords were equalled, if not surpassed, by their debts to other people, and that no composition of arrears would by itself give effectual relief. At the same time he must admit that there was much force in the objection raised last year by the hon. Member for Mayo (Mr. Dillon), when he pointed out that in the case of very small estates the cost of any proceedings would swallow up the whole of the assets. But what were they to do in such cases as those quoted by Mr. Tuke, when 25 families paying nominally £85 rent owed £333 arrears, and £381 shop debts. The rent only amounted to about 2*d.* a-day for each family, and no reduction of that would make the difference between prosperity and the reverse, and what would a man be profited when he had a millstone of other debts around his neck, even supposing the whole of his arrears was wiped off? Some hon. Gentlemen might retort that he, at any rate, ought not to object to such a course after saying at Devonshire House that the old arrears were worth nothing in cash to the landlords. He did say that, and he believed it to be true. The money that might have paid them was gone, and was irrecoverable; but he might have said also, and did say now, that the arrears generally would never have reached their present amount if there had been a little more common honesty in Ireland, and if the Plan of Campaign had not been condoned and defended by right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Opposition Bench. He could remember the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) saying once that a landlord had as much right to a fair rent as to the coat on his back, and another right hon. Gentleman used very strong language about public plunder. Of course, he did not expect him to repeat that sort of thing now.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): I said a fair rent.

VISCOUNT EBRINGTON said, he believed he had quoted the right hon. Gentleman correctly. He should like to know what the candid opinion of these right hon. Gentlemen was in regard to the Plan of Campaign? If any of them spoke in the course of the debate, he hoped they would kindly tell the House, as men who sought some day to be sitting opposite, whether they considered the Plan of Campaign honest or dishonest. It must be one or the other; it could not be both, and their candid opinion, if they were not afraid to give it, would be of interest both in this country and in Ireland, and would have great effect on the accumulation of arrears there at the present time. It appeared to him that if Parliament passed this Bill they would only be preparing the way for another Arrears Bill in the future. If the tenants in Ireland were taught that there was one class whom they might plunder with impunity, and that, too, with the half-disguised approval of right hon. Gentlemen sitting below—the Leaders of the Liberal Party—they would be great fools if they did not go on doing it. If there was only one section of the community—and that a small and unpopular one—interested in the honesty of the Irish tenants the temptation to dishonesty would be irresistible. He should think that even those who desired to establish Home Rule there would like a sounder foundation for it than that. But, however that might be, he wished to diminish those temptations, and to interest other people besides landlords in the honesty and solvency of the Irish tenants. He believed that this Bill would have just the contrary effect, and would only continue in precarious possession of their holdings men who, in their present condition of a general indebtedness, could not possibly do justice to them. He begged to second the Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "no Bill providing for a composition of arrears of rent in Ireland will be satisfactory to this House, and effectual for the relief of the tenants, which does not at the same time deal with their debts to other creditors besides the landlords." —(*Mr. Powell Williams.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said, that his opinions on the question of arrears of rent in Ireland were pretty well known, yet, inasmuch as he looked upon the situation as one of the gravest character, he hoped the House would allow him, as concisely as possible, to put those views fully before it that day. He was going, in the Division which was about to take place, to vote against the Government to which he had given all but a uniform support since he had entered the House. He was going to vote against his own Party, and he asked the House to believe that he would do neither the one nor the other unless under the sternest sense of duty. There were three objections which he thought might be fairly, and with great force, urged against any such proposal as that involved in the Bill of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), and in the Bill which he had himself also introduced into the House. He thought it might reasonably be asked, in the minds of some people at all events, why should this Land Question be re-opened again? Why should they have a Bill at all—were they ever to see the end of this seemingly interminable question? Now, he said that, although he did not agree with that contention, he could well understand the feelings of those who urged it. Parliament had passed, he admitted, great measures for the Irish tenant; but what he wished to urge was this—that Parliament never legislated for the Irish tenant until the year 1870; Parliament never touched the question in anything like a radical way until the people of this country, by the means of household suffrage in boroughs, got their hands on the machinery of that House. Before that date the Irish tenant had little or no protection in Ireland, and little or no representation in that House. The House of Commons was content to turn a deaf ear to Mr. Sharman Crawford and men like him; and the result of their perversity in the past was the state of Ireland to-day—a condition of affairs dangerous to the Empire and ruinous and hurtful to Ireland herself. No one was more ready than he to admit the value of what had been done in the past, and done in every case against the protest of the Irish landlords. He did not care whether it was the Act of 1870, the Act of 1881, the Act of 1882, or the Act of 1887; whenever men had stood up in that House to try and bring relief to the tenant farmers, they were met by an absolute *non possumus* from hon. Members on the other side of the House. He was prepared, as he had said, to admit the value of what had been done in the past—the great value of what had been done. He was prepared to go further, and say that if one or two small things were done—things which could not affect the landlords so much, but which meant much to the tenants—he, for one, would be prepared to consider the question as a closed book, and leave the rest to the solution of the purchase scheme which the Government had already foreshadowed. One of the small things to which he had attached vital importance was this very question of arrears. What was the situation? The question was raised last year, and here he asked the attention of the House and the attention of hon. Members who thought that the question ought not to have been raised at all, on the ground that they had had enough of land legislation. Now, what was the situation?

The question raised last year was deemed to be of such urgency that lengthened debates took place upon it, and with the full approval of the Liberal Unionist Party the hon. and learned Member for Inverness (Mr. Finlay) placed on the Notice Paper of the House an Amendment to the Government Land Bill substantially the same as the Bill which he (Mr. T. W. Russell) had introduced, and covering the principle of the Bill of the hon. Member for Cork. The Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for Inverness was not accepted by the Government, who favoured a modified form of bankruptcy proceeding, which the hon. Member for Cork could not accept, and this was a point which he wished to urge on the attention of the House. The question was admitted to be one of the utmost gravity and importance, and it was left unsettled because the Parties in the House could not agree upon it. But did that alter the gravity of the situation one iota? On the contrary, he thought it intensified it. It was unreasonable to say that, because last year they did not agree, and did nothing to settle the question, that this year they were to do nothing also. The Chairman of Committees, who did not often take part in the debates, thought the matter so urgent that he rose at the last moment and begged both sides to come to an agreement. The question, then, was urgent and absolutely imperious. He supported the 7th section of the Land Act of 1887, relying on the discretion of the Irish landlords, but he would not be caught trusting to it again. At least 5,000 notices had been served by registered letters under that section, and he held himself partly responsible for those registered letters. He was told that these notices would not all necessarily result in eviction. That was his case last year, and he believed it now; but even if they never resulted in eviction the tenants were absolutely at the mercy of the landlords, their rights and interests were destroyed, and their improvements confiscated. These notices had been falling with all the softness of an April shower over all Ireland during the last six months, and as surely as the House was now discussing this question they would blossom into a November hurricane, not only of evictions, but of ruin to tenants and landlords, to the peace of Ireland, and, as he held, to the union of the two countries. There was not a man in that House who did not know the effect of unjust evictions upon the English people. When the evictions were just, and had a moral basis to rest upon, he believed that the English people would insist that they should be carried out. But his conviction was that scarcely one of those evictions which would be due in a week or two, or a month or two, at least, had any moral basis to rest upon. They were not founded on or buttressed by justice at all, but upon injustice. It was the picture of burning roofs and ruined roof-trees in Bodyke, and places like Bodyke, which had led to the returns of Northwich and Spalding and Coventry, and he said emphatically that he would be no party, for the sake of Irish landlords, to ruin the best interests of Ireland and the best interests of England as well. He was asked why this question was to be re-opened. It was on account of its urgency, because Parliament had left it unsettled, and because evictions on account of arrears were being carried out, and because bad landlords were using those arrears to keep the tenants out of the Land Court, where they would have a fair rent fixed. He would like to read a letter, not from a constituent of his own—the tenants he represented were not generally in arrear—but from a tenant in the county of Louth. He had been bullied by landlords during the last 10 days as no Member of that House had been for what he was about to do; but they might bully away. The letter was as follows:—

> "I hope you will excuse my writing you to say that, unless you do something for us about arrears, we shall be ruined. Hundreds of us were caretakers in November last under Section 7, because we dared to serve notice to them to have a fair rent paid in accordance with the Land Act of 1887, and we are certain to be evicted in April for one year's rent and the hanging gale, and our landlords keep us out of Court because we are unable to pay the terrible arrears of rack-rents. They object to us going into Court in cases where the rent is £3 10*s*. and £4 10*s*. the Irish acre, double the Poor Law valuation, although we offered to pay the arrears at the rate of the new rent to be fixed, by borrowing money and getting a little more time. As we are loyal men, the banks would lend it to us if the fair rent were fixed: but we cannot get a fair rent fixed."

[Colonel SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): Will the hon. Member give the name?] He thought that when hon. Gentlemen opposite were asked for names by hon. Members below the Gangway they had refused, and very properly refused, to give names. He refused to give the writer's name, because he was not going to put that tenant at the mercy of Irish landlords; but he would hand the letter to the hon. and gallant Gentleman if he chose to read it for himself. He believed this letter was a complete answer to the contention that this question ought not to be raised, and that the House should have some repose on the matter of Irish Land Law. Now, one objection was raised to the Bill by his hon. Friend the Member for South Birmingham (Mr. Powell-Williams), and the question asked was—"Why should not all debts be treated alike?" That seemed a very plausible objection, and one likely to commend itself on the first blush; but he thought it to be all the more dangerous because it was introduced into that House by hon. Members who, he believed in his heart, wished well to the tenant farmers in Ireland. He would ask the House seriously to look at the debt to the shopkeeper and contrast it with the debt to the landlord. Let the House take the case of a shopkeeper in the West of Ireland, where most of this trouble arose. In the West of Ireland want and distress were chronic. A shopkeeper supplied an Irish family with the necessaries of life—what did that mean? Indian meal and the barest subsistence. That was supplied; the debt was never questioned by the tenant; it was not pressed for; the shopkeeper was willing to wait and take his chance of good times and of getting his money as he could. He would admit that the shopkeeper, like any other man, would probably charge a higher price for goods sold under such circumstances, and he did not blame him for that, nor did he suppose that anyone in business would do so; but, as a matter of fact, the debt was neither questioned nor pressed, nor did it constitute a danger to the State or to Ireland. He would now take the debt of the landlord. He said that had been questioned; it had been questioned by that House and by the Courts set up by the authority of the House, who had not only questioned it, but reduced it and declared it to be unfair . But that debt was pressed for; it was insisted upon; it was sued for, and evictions took place upon that unjust debt. Now, in his opinion, there was no analogy between the debt of the shopkeeper and the debt of the landlord under these circumstances. That was his case. He saw no reason why a grocer should be cheated out of his just debts because they refused to pay the landlord his unjust debt. If hon. Members knew the state of the law in Ireland now, they would know what took place every day. A merchant sued for his overdue account; he got a decree at Quarter Sessions; he proceeded to levy, but he was not in the same position as the landlord. The moment he proceeded to levy, notice was served upon him under the 8th of Queen Anne, in whose days a tenant had not much chance, that unless he paid the arrears of rent due by the debtor he proceeded at his peril; he seized for an amount equal to one-half the rent due, but he must pay the landlord every penny of the year's rent. And yet, when the landlord had absolute priority now, he was to be told that the landlord and the shopkeeper ought to be on the same footing. He was about tired of the gombeen man. One would imagine that he had studied that question, but those wise men from Birmingham seemed to know more about the gombeen man than he did. The fact was that since the extension of the banking system in Ireland, as every man who knew anything about the country knew, the gombeen man had practically disappeared. Would anyone pay the gombeen man 20 per cent for money that he could get from a bank at 6 per cent? No. The farmer had his name now on half-a-dozen bills at the bankers, and, as he had said, the gombeen man had disappeared. All he had to say with regard to the Amendment was that he respected the source from which it proceeded; he was perfectly certain that his hon. Friend and those whom he represented were sincerely desirous of benefiting the tenants in Ireland; but he was certain that their plan would not work, and that it was incapable of being brought into operation in Ireland. He should vote for the second reading of the Bill, and he was not able then, nor would he be able at any future time, to give the slightest support to any proposition of the kind contained in the Amendment. It was objected to all such legislation as this that it was absolutely demoralizing to the tenants and to honest men who desired to pay their debts. He frankly admitted it; but it was absolutely impossible for any Gentleman who was going to vote for the Amendment to plead that excuse. But the Bill of the hon. Member for Cork limited the demoralization. It did not sweep away arrears at all; it simply gave a discretion to the County Court Judges, of whom he would say that they were not likely to do anything but absolute justice between landlord and tenant—it simply vested in the County Court Judge a discretion on a simple issue. But the Amendment of his hon. Friend widened the issue and emphasized the demoralization. It brought in all debts, whether sued for or not; and therefore the Amendment of his hon. Friend, as far as demoralization was concerned, was worse than the Bill of the hon. Member for Cork. Then, again, this charge of demoralization applied to the Bankruptcy Laws, almost all of which were designed for the protection of the unfortunate but honest trader, although it could not be denied that fraudulent debtors got through the Bankruptcy Court as well as unfortunate traders. He would now come to what the Bill of the hon. Member for Cork proposed. The principle and kernel of the Bill was this:—the hon. Member took the 30th section of the Land Act, which gave the Judge of the County Court, when ejectment was sued for, the power to reduce the rent, and extended it so that the Court would have power also to reduce arrears. That was the sum and substance of the Bill of the hon. Member for Cork. He was told that the whole matter was amply provided for by the principle of giving to the Chairman of the Quarter Sessions power to extend the time for the payment of arrears. He was informed by a high legal authority that the decree of the County Court Judge only lasted 12 months, and that explained the reason why the Judges refused to extend the time for the payment of arrears for more than 12 months. The County Court Judge at Carlow was reported as saying that the County Court Judges had considered the question, and had come to the conclusion that when men were in a hopeless state of insolvency it was useless to give time; and in no case that he was aware of had they spread the arrears over a period of more than 12 months. He thought his right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) did not contemplate anything of the kind, because last year he made the statement that the discretion of the County Court Judges was absolutely unlimited. When the Land Act passed he had dreamed of a composition, and that was the reason why he acquiesced in the 30th section; but he had been bitterly disappointed. He thought that when the poor landlords came into Court with the poor tenants the County Court Judge, who had power to make a composition, would have been willing to do it. His case was that if the rent was unfair, and it had been declared to be unfair, the arrears could not possibly be fair. Almost all these arrears had accumulated in bad times, and he held that it was not an extravagant proposal to ask that the County Court Judge, who had power to deal with rent, should have power to deal with arrears also. It was clear that the landlords could not get all their rents and arrears, and he thought they were the most foolish of men when, having a bad debt on their books, they absolutely refused a good arrangement. His last point was that by their not dealing with arrears, tenants were absolutely deprived of the benefit of the very legislation that had been passed for their benefit. No doubt they were entitled to go into the Land Court, and get a fair rent fixed, whether they had arrears or not. But, as a matter of fact, they could not get into the Land Court. They were threatened and bullied by the agents, and the arrears were held over their heads as a whip when they tried to go there and get the benefit which the House designed for them. He wished now to make a very brief personal statement. Some of his friends had said that he had rushed and forced this question to the front. There was nothing more untrue. He asked the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether, in the speech he made on the Address, he did not beg and beseech the Government to deal with the question of arrears? The course he had taken on the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Central Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) was not due to any belief that there was no force in the Amendment.

but to the fact that, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian had stated, an Amendment to the Address was practically a Vote of Censure on the Government. He was told that he was encouraging the National League and supporting the Plan of Campaign; but he did not think that many people could be got to believe that. He thought he was the last Member of the House against whom any such charge could be made. He had never given any encouragement to the National League, and he had fought against the Plan of Campaign much more than the landlords—they had only succumbed to it. He thought it was unworthy of Members of the House to condemn him for performing the duty which he believed to be solemnly laid upon him; and he said that not only with reference to Tyrone, because Tyrone was not affected by this question, for the tenant farmers there had not much arrears, but he could not forget that he was a Member of Parliament. He was told, also, that he was obstructing the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland in his work of pacification, and undoing the work of the Crimes Act. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman, when he came to speak, would be able to tell the landlords that he had defended him in his work a little more than they had done. They had only provided work for him. He had tried to help the right hon. Gentleman in what he knew to have been an arduous task. Whatever might be said, and by whomsoever it might be said, he was doing what he believed to be right by the people of Ireland. There might come a time—and he was not sure that he did not see signs of it—when there would be no room for men like himself in Irish politics, when the landlords would be left face to face with Irish Members below the Gangway, and when the loyal tenantry in Ulster, as they did in 1885, would stand sullenly by. That time might come, but so long as he stood there he should maintain that they had a right to be free from unjust debt, and that those who had a just claim on the tenants of Ireland ought not to be mixed up in this question. He should go into the Lobby with the hon. Member for Cork with a perfectly clear conscience, and he was glad to say that he should be accompanied by his hon. Friend and Colleague the Member for South Londonderry (Mr. Lea). They would have the sight to-day, when they went to a Division, of every Member for Ireland, save and except the landlord party, walking into the Lobby with the hon. Member for Cork; and they would have the Radical and Liberal Unionists walking into the other Lobby to support the worst phase of Irish landlordism which had cursed Ireland since the days of the Tudors, and which would repeal the Union as sure as fate.

Colonel SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.) said, the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down (Mr. T. W. Russell) had informed the House that he foresaw the day when he would have to seek some other field of political activity in Ireland, and when he would no longer stand between the Party to which he (Colonel Saunderson) belonged and the Irish Members below the Gangway. He wished to state that he and his Colleagues had never required any buffer between them and the Irish Party opposite. He and his Friends held strong views against those of hon. Gentlemen opposite, and they were always ready to meet those Gentlemen face to face, and to ask the House and the country to give the decision on the result of their contention. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. T. W. Russell) gave the House, in the terms of a letter, which he (Colonel Saunderson) was surprised he had not verified, an instance of oppression which had evidently made a great impression on his mind, in which a landlord had behaved with great severity to his tenants in the matter of arrears. He did not give the name of any of the tenants, or of the estate, nor did he say whether he had made any personal inquiry as to the truth of the statements which had been made to him by letter. He (Colonel Saunderson) often received letters containing strong statements, but he never founded any argument upon them without first verifying their accuracy. From what he knew he was disposed to say it would be found on inquiry that there was very little foundation for the statements in the letter which the hon. Gentleman had quoted, in which case, of course, the arguments founded upon them would fall to pieces. The hon. Gentleman had candidly admitted that the Bill before the House would not find favour with the constituency he represented; therefore he must be exonerated from the suspicion of being actuated by interested motives in the course he had taken. The object of the Bill was the protection of tenants who, according to the hon. Gentleman, required protection in other parts of Ireland than Ulster. He (Colonel Saunderson) never knew that the Union depended on the tenant farmers in Cork, Kerry, and Munster. He believed that the Union would even survive the desertion, if such a thing took place, of the hon. Member himself. He believed that the Party of Law and Order outside Ulster — even in Munster — would stick by the Union, even if the House rejected this Arrears Bill. Therefore, he hoped the House would not take the sudden action now recommended by the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell), and supported by the hon. Member for South Tyrone, in the belief that to reject it would endanger the Union and the consolidation of the Empire at large. Before passing such a Bill, the House would naturally ask whether it was likely to benefit the class in Ireland which was deserving of sympathy. Was there in Ireland a class which absolutely required the protection the Bill sought to afford? He maintained that the only class whom the Bill would benefit were those who did not deserve the sympathy of the House. It would assist a political Party which deserved no sympathy, and he denied that it would practically benefit any class. There was no doubt, then, what course he must pursue; but he would like to correct an error into which the hon. Member for South Tyrone had fallen. That hon. Gentleman undoubtedly did not like landlords; he had a prejudice against that excellent class to which he (Colonel Saunderson) had the honour to belong; and he informed the House that when any remedial measure was proposed in Parliament on behalf of the Irish tenants it was invariably opposed to the bitter end by the landlords. But that was quite a misconception. When the Land Bill of 1870 was introduced, he (Colonel Saunderson) happened to be a Member of that House, and he supported that Bill all through, and in that course he had the sympathy of a great number of Irish landlords. At that time the hon. Gentleman was not a Member of the House; he was engaged in a more temperate agitation than that in which he now found himself, and that must be the hon. Member's excuse for his ignorance in the matter. He (Colonel Saunderson) should, however, oppose this Bill once more, because he considered that the hon. Member for the City of Cork had not made out a case in its favour. The House would be probably agreed that a very strong case indeed ought to be made out to unsettle the legislation so recent on this subject as that of last year, and bring in a new system of adjusting rents in Ireland before it could accept such a proposal. Were they to have Land Bills for Ireland every year? Undoubtedly they were coming before the House with increasing frequency, and if they did not desire to establish the principle that land legislation should be brought in every year for Ireland it was the duty of the House to reject the Bill. He absolutely denied that the hon. Member for City of Cork had made out a case strong enough to justify the House in departing from the wise principle of refusing to re-open the legislation on the Land Question, which had been settled, and which had secured peace in Ireland. The hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) had spoken of 5,000 eviction notices dropping down upon Ireland; but surely the hon. Gentleman knew that the number of evictions pending was not indicated by the number of notices issued, and that it often required more than one notice before an eviction could be accomplished from a single holding. He (Colonel Saunderson) had known of a case in which 10 notices were issued to recover possession of one holding; therefore the large figures which had been given must be discounted largely to arrive at the number of evictions they represented. In order to induce the House to pass the Bill, the hon. Member for the City of Cork needed to clearly show that during the last four or five years rents had been too high, and could not be paid by the tenants; but he did not show that. The hon. Gentleman had no right to say that during the years 1883-5 judicial rents in Ireland were too high, and if a rent was not too high accumulation of arrears should not be allowed to take place. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E.

Gladstone) brought in an Arrears Bill in 1882 which practically whitewashed the Irish tenants who were insolvent up to November, 1881; therefore the existence of arrears was not the reason why the Irish tenants did not claim the protection of the Land Act. But a large number did claim that protection, and in a Return issued by the Land Commissioners he found the following facts:—In the year 1883 the average reductions of rent all over Ireland by the Commissioners was 19·5 per cent, from which it might be assumed that the rents then fixed were fair. In 1884 the average was only 18·7 per cent, the value of land having apparently risen; no arrears, therefore, were justifiable in either of those years. In 1885 the average reduction was 18·1, showing, if anything, a still further slight increase in the value of land. It was not until 1886 that the great drop in the value of produce took place, and that drop was at once acknowledged by the Land Commission. So, in 1886, the percentage of reductions rose to 24·1; and in 1887 it further increased to 31·3, which was an advance of nearly 12 per cent upon the reduction in 1883. Those figures showed that during the years 1883, 1884, and 1885 there was no fall in the value of land, and that the rents fixed by the Land Commission were almost the same until 1886. Where, then, was the right to have the arrears in respect of those years wiped out? The Bill of last year dealt with half the rents which accrued last year; therefore, only half the rents of 1887 remained to be dealt with under the arrangements of the Bill under discussion, if the House intended to deal with arrears on the principle of last year's Bill. But the reduction must be *pari passû* with the fall in prices. By how much, then, would they reduce the arrears? The principal object, he supposed, of the promoters of the Bill was to set the insolvent tenant on his legs again; but would the remission that it was proposed to allow have that effect? No; he ventured to say that the relief proposed by the Bill would be but a drop in an ocean. If the tenant was thoroughly insolvent—indebted not only to the landlord, but also to the shopkeepers—8, 9, or 10 per cent taken off the arrears of one or two years would have no effect at all in placing him in a satisfactory position to make his livelihood on the land. What, then, was the only remedy? The remedy applied equally to judicial and non-judicial tenants. Indeed, there was only one remedy, and that was free sale. When the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, in his Irish Land Bill, gave the right of free sale to the tenants, he probably had in view the relief of the glut in the Irish land market. When a tenant found he could not carry on his agricultural operations any longer he availed himself of a right, conferred for the first time on tenants outside Ulster, of selling his farm to the highest bidder. But these farms did not find such a ready sale now as in former days; and it was a remarkable fact that the price of tenant right in the open market increased in proportion as rents were reduced; indeed, sometimes tenant right sold for more than the fee-simple would fetch. It appeared that if the House should affirm the principle of bringing in an Arrears Act every year, the price which tenant rights would sell for would soon be enormous. It might be asked why had not that right of free sale worked outside Ulster as well as it did within the Province, and why was it not looked upon as a greater blessing by the people? Because, outside Ulster, free sale was absolutely tabooed. In Ulster, where the exercise of the right was permitted, it had worked well. Taking next the case of non-judicial tenants, he found that, undoubtedly, a great number of tenants had not sought the protection of the Land Act. Now, what was the reason? In many cases the tenants had not applied, because their rents had seemed so reasonable that it could not be supposed that the Commissioners would alter them. But another reason was that the hon. Member for the City of Cork had told the tenants not to apply for reductions under the Act. The advice of the hon. Gentleman received a powerful sanction in Ireland from the organization of which he was the head. Indeed, it was for giving that advice, or, in other words, interfering with the beneficent intentions of the great act of justice to Ireland which the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian at that time looked upon as a final measure, that the hon. Gentleman was imprisoned under that right hon. Gentleman's Administration. The hon. Member for the City of Cork was put into

Kilmainham Gaol for being reasonably suspected of inciting persons to intimidate others from paying rents lawfully due. In the opinion of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian—of those days—the hon. Member, in inciting persons not to pay rents, was contravening the law of the land. So far, then, as the tenants holding non-judicial leases were concerned, this Bill would not help them, or would relieve them from a very small part of the incubus which pressed upon them, according to the hon. Member for South Tyrone and the hon. Member for the City of Cork. It would not have the effect anticipated by its promoters. But he (Colonel Saunderson) opposed the Bill upon higher grounds, but chiefly because it involved a principle absolutely fatal to the prosperity and hopes of Ireland. If this Bill was passed, on what principle would any Irish tenant hereafter pay any more rent? By agreeing to this measure they would establish the principle that if a tenant, whether judicial or non-judicial, only withheld his rent and refused to pay it, a Bill would be brought into Parliament to whitewash him, and clear off his debts. Such a principle must be fatal to the morality of the Irish people. The Irish tenant was a tolerably quick-witted man, who would listen to the voice of the charmer and say—"I will pay no more rent, or, at any rate, only a fractional part of what I owe." Then he would appeal to his friends in the House of Commons to bring in a Bill which would free him from the debts which the law required him to pay. That would ultimately destroy the morality of the Irish people. Undoubtedly the Arrears Act of the right hon. Gentleman tided over a difficulty at the time; but everyone who knew Ireland in 1882 knew that it would have a permanently evil effect on the future of the country. The Bill before the House re-echoed the same principle, which would run all along the legislation of the future if the House sanctioned a principle so absolutely unfair, pernicious, and unjust. But it would do more. By legislation such as was now proposed, they would burn into the Irish mind the lessons which had been so sedulously taught by Irish agitators. If Ireland was ever to become a happy and prosperous country, one lesson must be taught to the tenants and all other classes. [Mr. PARNELL: Landlords as well.] Yes; landlords as well, that the law of the land must be obeyed. But what was the teaching which the tenants were receiving at present? In December, 1886, the hon. and learned Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy) said, at a meeting of the National League—

> "If they allowed themselves to be hunted out like vermin, rats, and dogs, they deserved the fate of rats and dogs; but, if they resisted, that which had happened before in Ireland would happen again—the law would be changed to suit them."

Were they going to sanction that principle by passing this Bill? Then the hon. and learned Member said in January last year—

> "I decline to obey the law. The law for England is made for the English people, and the law for Ireland must be made to suit the Irish people."

It was strange that the hon. and learned Gentleman should refuse to obey the law, while he made his living by practising it. The question was, whether Ireland would in the future be a more happy and contented country if Parliament affirmed the principle that all Irishmen had to do was to resist the law; that, under certain conditions, they were not to pay rent; and that if they only refused to pay Bills would be brought into the House of Commons by aspiring politicians like the hon. Member for South Tyrone, which would wipe away the debt which, up to the present time, the law of the land said they ought to pay? He hoped the House would hesitate before it passed such a measure as that. The argument in favour of the Bill was that the Irish tenant must be kept in Ireland, that he loved his native land, and that you must do all you could to keep him there; but what about the shopkeeper? Was he not as much an Irishman as the farmer? If this Bill was passed to help the tenant, why should not one be passed to help the shopkeeper, who might be insolvent, to get rid of his debts by mulcting the manufacturers who had supplied him with goods? In the transcendental sense the doctrine applied as much to the shopkeeper as to the tenant. The passing of measures of this kind demoralized all sections of the Irish people. There was a growing notion among the people that debts need not be paid, and that debts to shopkeepers had as little sacrednesss as debts to landlords. A case occurred the other day which showed the exact condition of demoralization into which the people of Ireland were rapidly falling with regard to the questions of right and wrong. The case was tried before Dr. Darley, Q.C., County Court Judge, at Carlow. The plaintiff, Mr. Daniel James, was an ex-constable, who was now a shopkeeper, and he sued a man named Kelly for £1 9*s.* 5*d.*, the balance of a debt. The solicitor of the plaintiff wrote him a letter claiming the debt, and the defendant wrote on the back of it the following reply:—

> "September 19, 1887. Dear Sir, — I am surprised at an intelligent man like you to imagine that I am such a d——d fool to give you or the ex-head money that I want a d——d sight worse than either you or he. You did well to charge 2*s.* 6*d.* for a penny stamp and drop of ink. I did not care if it were £20, because I do not mean to give any money these hard times. If you imagine there are fools to be found in the latter end of the 19th century, you are greatly mistaken, Sir. Are you aware that if Mr. James were to allow me 50 per cent reduction for all the money I left in his shop he would be in my debt now? And do you not know that the Plan of Campaign is going in for more than 50 per cent for all kinds of debts, notwithstanding the imprisonment of William O'Brien and Balfour's Coercion Act? Have you the audacity to threaten people and the British Home Rule Union in Ireland at present? Unless you keep quiet I shall tell them about your conduct towards me, or I shall have it brought before the House. Ned Harrington would do it in a pair of minutes. Ned will be one of our Government in the old House in College Green ere long. The civilized world shall be informed of your conduct if you apply to me again. I am happy to know you or your client cannot get money from me that only law and not justice declares to be yours; and, thank God, the Irish and English democracies are now united for the first time under the Irish and English leaders, and such tyrants as you and James will have to conduct yourselves, or else leave the country. Should I receive any more annoyance from you I will acquaint my legal adviser."

The Judge gave a decree for the plaintiff, and remarked that he supposed that this was an extension of the Plan of Campaign. The principle was now permeating the Irish people, and the spread of it must be checked. To adopt such a Bill as that would be to perpetuate the discords and outrageous principles which were the cause of the existing state of things in Ireland which were so much to be regretted. This Bill was not merely an Arrears Bill. He did not blame the hon. Member for the City of Cork for bringing it in; it was the least he could do, because the greater proportion of the arrears arose from the fact that the National League, of which he was a member or the head, had laid hold of the money, and so prevented the payment of rent. Hon. Members opposite could not contradict that—["Oh, oh!"]—they dared not do so. They knew very well that all over the South and West of Ireland, wherever the National League predominated, resolutions had been passed over and over again condemning those who had fulfilled up to now their legal obligations. The greater proportion of the arrears which the hon. Member for the City of Cork sought to wipe out were arrears of his own creation, and the non-payment of them was due to the action of the organization of which he was the head. The hon. Member, therefore, could do no less than attempt to whitewash men of debts so brought about. Some of them were owing by men who could pay and would not, and who had lodged their money under the Plan of Campaign, instead of paying it to the landlords. Were these the men who ought to be whitewashed by the House? He ventured to maintain that to adopt the principle of the Bill would simply be to place in the hands of the hon. Member and his organization a mighty lever with which to continue to stir up that discontent which gave life to agitation. For those reasons he hoped the House would reject the Bill. But he could not say that he liked the Amendment either. Last year he should have voted for the Bankruptcy Clauses of the Government. But he did not like the Amendment, because it left open the question of bringing in another Arrears Bill in the immediate future; and to be continually settling and unsettling this question would be detrimental to and destructive of the best interests of Ireland.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): As I know the time of the House is very limited, I will put what I have to say into as brief and concise a form as I possibly can. At the outset let me observe that the Bill of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), and the observations by which he introduced it to the House, are characteristic illustrations of Irish procedure in reference to this question. That procedure follows three distinct lines. In the first place, if I may venture, coming from where I do, to use an American expression, I would say that the Irish Members "catch on" to some admitted grievance. They get hold of something which every reasonable and fair-minded man will allow deserves a remedy, and upon that they found their subsequent action. In the second place, they proceed to exaggerate this grievance, to develop and to magnify it beyond anything which is reasonable or fair. And, in the third place, they produce as a remedy a measure which goes altogether far beyond either the grievance or the exaggeration of the grievance. The effect of this proceeding is to continue, and even to create and stimulate, that unrest and agitation in Ireland which it ought to be the object of every patriotic Irish Member to diminish and to do away with. This is undoubtedly the effect of the policy of hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway. What is the object of this Bill? It is somewhat difficult for us to speak of motives. I hope the House noted particularly the peroration of the hon. Member for Cork, and if they did they would find that the object of the Bill is much less the material advantage and the practical gain which it is to bring to the tenants of Ireland, and that it is rather brought forward as an illustration of the necessity and desirability of Home Rule. The hon. Member for Cork says we have to learn from this the absolute incapacity of the Parliament at Westminster to deal with the Irish Land Question; and I assume he infers from that the necessity of establishing a Parliament in Dublin in order to take up the business which we at Westminster are unable to accomplish. But the hon. Member for Cork seems to forget altogether that he and his Colleagues voted for a Bill which was brought in by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), and which equally took from Irish Members the power of dealing with the land, and relegated it to this despised Parliament at Westminster, which the hon. Member for Cork declares to be totally incompetent to deal with the question. I pass on to speak of the divisions of this Irish policy. There is undoubtedly a grievance to be remedied, for the House has decided that by exceptional circumstances rents have become excessive in amount, and they have authorized Courts to deal with them by way of reduction. It appears to me to follow that any arrears which may have resulted from these rents must also be considered excessive, and ought also to be dealt with by the Courts. I think that was practically admitted by the Government in our debates last Session; and I have always held that, to that extent, the Land Act of 1887 was incomplete, and ought to be supplemented. In the second place, I think that the hon. Member for Cork exaggerates the extent and the effect of these grievances. He assumes, by calculations peculiar to himself, that there are something like 6,000 ejectment notices pending, which must and will end in the eviction of the tenants. We have grave reasons to doubt figures brought forward in this way by hon. Members below the Gangway. I remember that when the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) last year spoke of the number of ejectment notices then pending, he said that the notices which would be immediately substituted under the 7th section of the Act would affect 20,000 or 30,000 families. It has since turned out that only 3,000, at the outside, have at present been affected. The hon. Member for Cork will find, however, that the number of notices served since January are very few in comparison with anything he had stated. These notices are served in order to bring the tenants to book who refuse to make any agreement with their landlords; but there is no reason to assert that any large proportion of these will be carried so far as eviction. In the third place, I ask—whether the number be 6,000 or 3,000 notices—if any large proportion are due to excessive rent? Assume the case as the hon. Member puts it. Assume that the arrears are partly due to rents which have been held by the Courts to be too high. Those rents, on an average, have been held to be too high to the extent of 14 or 15 per cent. It is possible to that extent the arrears may be excessive, and I say that they ought to be reduced. But is that the case of the hon. Member for Cork? Does the hon. Member contend that if they were reduced to that extent the tenants would be relieved to any appreciable extent, or that the evictions which he desires to prevent would be avoided? The Bill of the hon. Member goes altogether beyond any case he has made out. If his view is to be taken as a ground for legislation, that can be met by a Bill giving power to the Court when reducing the rent to reduce the arrears in the same proportion, which would be, at the outside, 14 or 15 per cent, leaving to the tenant all his involvements to other creditors as well as the landlord. It appears to me that the Bill of the hon. Member altogether exceeds any fair case that he has brought before the House. In the first place, there is no limit of time. I do not comment upon that at any length, because the hon. Member has said that he would be willing to accept a reasonable limit of two years. But why does he bring forward a Bill which is an exaggerated demand, and then, with an appearance of moderation, say that he will be willing to reduce that demand very considerably hereafter? Then there are two other limitations to which I think he should agree as being just and necessary. There ought to be a limit to the amount of reduction, which ought not to exceed the proportion in which the rent is declared by the Court to be excessive. It is only with that part of the rent which is declared by the Court to be excessive with regard to which discretion ought to be given to the Court to deal. In the third place, there ought to be a limit as to the class of arrears to be dealt with. The hon. Member has argued as if the Court would only have to deal with unjust arrears arising out of unjust rents. But there may be arrears from other causes. There may be arrears from misfortune, such as murrain amongst his cattle. Suppose, owing to that or to some other accident, the tenant loses all the cattle he had accumulated, then, owing to no fault of his own, he gets into arrear. The Bill of the hon. Member would make the loss fall upon the landlord, although it could not be said that the rent was an unjust one. But it was unfair that the landlord alone should be called upon to bear all the misfortunes of the tenant. While the grievance is admitted, the only just remedy would be a Bill entitling the Court to reduce the arrears from 14 to 15 per cent, but that would be perfectly inadequate to meet the difficulty. The real difficulty in Ireland does not rest upon the fact that a certain portion of the rents demanded during the last two years in Ireland have been excessive and unfair. That may be a grievance of the tenant with which we ought to deal, but the real difficulty is a different one. It is the complete insolvency and embarrassment of a large portion of the tenants, and unless you deal with that you do no good. If you took the whole rent away from the landlord the difficulty would remain, and in a great number of cases would not have the effect of continuing the tenancies. In addition to that, see what other objections there are to the proposal brought forward by the hon. Member for Cork. It would create throughout Ireland a sense of insecurity, for every tenant would be tempted to withhold his rent in order that the arrears might be dealt with before the Court, and he might have his chance of getting a reduction. What injustice, moreover, you would inflict on the honest tenant who pays his rent and struggles to fulfil his obligations, and who finds his dishonest neighbour who has refused to pay getting a reduction! He would be taught a lesson which he could hardly fail to learn—that for the future it would be to his advantage to carry out the Plan of Campaign, of which, in effect, this Bill is only a clause and provision. The real difficulty is the hopeless insolvency of a considerable number of the tenants. How has that insolvency arisen? I am informed that before 1870 the tenants in Ireland had but very little credit with the shopkeeper, and hardly any with the money lender. Now, the shopkeeper is represented as a kind of beneficent agent—a sort of philanthropist, who, out of the pure goodness of his heart, steps in to the aid of the tenant, and who alone interposes between the tenant and famine. But before 1870, when the Irish tenants were in a much worse condition of famine than they have been since, they did not interpose. When in 1870 the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian passed his land legislation, he gave the tenants a security, and, the tenants possessing that security, the shopkeeper was at once induced to tempt the tenant to get into debt, not only in times of famine, but in times of prosperity. The money lenders also, since 1870, have lent the tenants money, and induced them to indulge in a kind of living they had never indulged in before, and which, in comparison with their former mode of life, is an extravagant one. That is the history of the indebtedness which has grown up since 1870, and involved so many poor tenants in inextricable embarrassment. Under these circumstances the Bill is no good. It is a mere tinkering of the question, which leaves the tenant burdened with all these debts, whilst, at the same time, it relieves him of a portion of his debt to the landlord. I am now coming into conflict with my hon. Friend the Member for South Tyrone. I have the greatest deference to his opinion, and I know him to be a great authority on all matters connected with the land in Ireland. I appreciate in all humility the humour of his sneer at the wise men from Birmingham, though I do not think it comes with a good grace from him when he was one of those who pressed one of these "wise men from Birmingham" to go down to his own constituency and address the tenant farmers upon this very question, including the question of arrears. With all deference to him, I may say that I do not agree with the distinction he endeavours to set up between the debt of the landlord and the debt of the shopkeeper. He says the debt of the landlord is an unfair debt. I dispute that. In many cases it is not an unfair debt. In cases where arrears are arrears of a fair rent it cannot be said to be an unfair debt. In any case the unfairness refers only to a portion of the debt due to the landlord, and as regards 85 per cent the debt of the landlord is as fair as that of the shopkeeper. Again I dispute the hon. Member's contention that the debt of the shopkeeper and the money lender is in all cases a fair debt. I say that where the shopkeeper and the money lender exact an unfair and usurious profit and interest the debt due to them is as unfair and inequitable as any debt due to the landlord. On these grounds I am prepared to treat both debts in the same way and by the same methods. I can go further, and say that without regard to the origin of the debt, and looking only to the relation between debtor and creditor, it is desirable to relieve the debtor from the inextricable embarrassment in which he is involved. But to relieve him of part of his liabilities is to do him no service, but to involve him in a certainty of greater troubles. On all these grounds I believe that in the interest of the landlord, in the interest of the tenant, in the interest of the shopkeeper, and for the peace of Ireland, it is desirable to relieve the tenant wholly and at once of all his embarrassments in cases where he is really unable to meet them. I may be told by the hon. Member for Cork and his Friends that this is a proposal to make the whole of Ireland bankrupt. It does nothing of the kind. Last year hon. Members were offered this result without bankruptcy. [Mr. DILLON: No.] I take no contradiction from the hon. Member on that point. I am speaking of what I know. I ask him to refer to the debates in *Hansard*, and the reports of his own speech on the subject, and he will find that he was offered by the Government, at my suggestion, the proposal that, without going into bankruptcy, the tenant who claimed relief from his embarrassments might be called upon to give a list of his liabilities and be relieved of the whole of them by a composition or payment by instalments—[Mr. CHANCE: That is bankruptcy.]—or by such other measures as to the Court might seem just. That was the proposal made, and rejected by hon. Members below the Gangway. The hon. Member who says it is bankruptcy is a lawyer and knows it is not bankruptcy. I may be entirely ignorant and unwise as regards Irish land, but I might be expected to know something about bankruptcy; and this is nothing of the sort. That the tenant in this case is insolvent is a fact that nothing can prevent being true, whether you relieve him or not; but the proposal of the Government which I supported was a proposal to relieve him without the odium, without the stigma, without the costs, without the disqualifications which attach to bankruptcy. Does not the hon. Member know that every proposal for bankruptcy must involve a *cessio bonorum*, and that here there was to be none? The Court was to have the power to deal with him, having regard to equity and justice, and without regard to the fact that it left in his hands the principal asset he possessed—the goodwill of his farm. It is not a system of bankruptcy. It is a system of tenant relief, and the only one, in my opinion, that will settle this question. We are told that the landlord is in a different position to the other creditors, because he presses for his debt and they do not. The hon. Member for South Tyrone omitted to state that the credit given by the shopkeeper is voluntary and can be stopped, whereas the credit given by the landlord is compulsory, and can only be brought to an end by evicting the tenant. In that case the position of the landlord is much harder than that of the shopkeeper, and it is much more unreasonable that he should be called upon to bear the whole burden of the tenant's insolvency. We are told that the shopkeeper does not press for his debt. Of course he does not, so long as he has good security, which is being increased at the expense of the landlord. He will wait until the landlord's interest in the holding has been altogether whittled away, and when the whole interest has passed into the hands of the tenant then we shall hear of ejectment of tenants at the instance of the money lender and the shopkeeper. On these grounds I would urge hon. Members below the Gangway to reconsider their decision. The hon. Member for Cork says that if the Government accepted this view it was their duty to bring in a Bill. I do not agree with him. Her Majesty's Government have said that, so far as they are concerned, and so far as their power goes, this shall be an English and a Scottish Session, and not an Irish Session in the sense in which we have had it before, when the whole time of the House has been devoted to Ireland. I think, therefore, that the Government would be inconsistent if they were to bring in a Bill in view of the statement of the hon. Member for Cork that he would meet it with unrelenting hostility. Under these circumstances, there would be little chance for the progress of any English or Scottish legislation. If hon. Members from Ireland will reconsider their position, and once and for all agree that they will not continually throw their shield over the usurer, the money lender, and the publican—the classes, no doubt, from whom they receive their largest support—but take a patriotic course, and promise support to the Government in bringing in a Bill founded on these lines, we might all unite in pressing the Government to bring in a measure; but if they will not do this or meet them the responsibility is theirs, and let the tenants of Ireland know that if they are not relieved—not only of their debts to their landlords, but all their other debts—the fault lies with the hon. Member for Cork.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): The right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken asked me to refer to the debates of last year on the important point he has raised, and said he would take no contradiction from the Member for East Mayo. [Mr. J. Chamberlain: On this point.] Yes; on this point; but he will take a contradiction based upon the reports he has referred to. I think I shall be able to convince the House in the course of five minutes that I am right, and that the right hon. Gentleman will then be obliged to take a contradiction from the Member for East Mayo. What was the statement made by the right hon. Gentleman? That Her Majesty's Government had offered to us, at the close of last Session, a measure for dealing with the question of debts in Ireland, on the principle of treating all debts on the same basis, but without applying bankruptcy to the Irish tenants, and that we refused the offer. Now, according to the authorized report, in the course of that debate the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) stood up and said that he understood that the Irish Members declined distinctly to accept—

> "Any arrangement by which the debt of the ordinary creditor was to be put upon an equality with the debt of the landlord."

The report went on as follows:—

> "Mr. Dillon: Nothing of the sort. I distinctly said, and so did my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), we made an offer—that is, a definite offer—by which the debts of all creditors should be treated on an equal footing."

Then let the House listen to the answer of the Chief Secretary. The report went on thus—

> "Mr. A. J. Balfour said, that, at all events, it would not be contested that in the meaning the Government had always attached to the phrase 'dealing with all creditors alike'—in the sense contemplated by Bankruptcy Law in this or any country in the world—neither hon. Gentlemen from Ireland nor the Leaders of the Gladstonian Party were prepared to accept the suggestion which the Government had made to the House."—(3 *Hansard*, [318] 1483.)

Later on, I again rose, wishing to make the position absolutely distinct and clear, knowing of the custom of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. Chamberlain) not to accept contradictions unless they are in printed matter and can be produced, and cannot be got over. I again rose in course of the debate, after the Chairman of Committees had intervened, and I said on behalf of the Irish Party—

> "The other night the Chief Secretary made the following statement;—'The Government are prepared to consider any plan by which the creditors shall be placed on the same footing.' To this the hon. Member for Cork replied that he was prepared to accept the principle that every creditor should be placed on the same footing according as he pressed his claim; but he said that every creditor did not press his claim. The Irish Members were perfectly willing to go so far, because so far they saw their way; but as to the proposal suggested or outlined by the Government, all the fear of the Irish Members was that the creditors should be dragged in spite of themselves into a bankruptcy system which would be expensive and destructive to their interests, and which would do more evil than it could hope to cure."—(*Ibid.*, 1487-8.)

Now, has the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, I ask, given the House an honest or a truthful statement of what took place on that occasion, when I have proved to the satisfaction of every honourable man that the Irish Members have repeatedly offered to accept the principle of equal treatment of creditors, although that, I contend, is an iniquitous principle? We, however, saw that we were face to face with a powerful Government, who threatened to exterminate our people unless we consented to give way and accept this unjust principle; and I said that rather than see our people driven from their homes I would consent to the shopkeepers and bakers being defrauded of their just debts than risk such a result. The choice was a direful one, and of the two great evils I chose the lesser. Will the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham now accept my contradiction of the statement which he has so deliberately made, that the Irish Members absolutely refused to accept the offer to treat all debts on the same footing?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: There is absolutely no contradiction—[*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"]—no contradiction of anything I said in the extracts which have been read by the hon. Member. The Government proposed that all creditors should be treated alike and simultaneously, alike in point of time, as well as that they would be put upon equal terms. The hon. Member for the City of Cork and the hon. Member for East Mayo refused their proposal, and, in consequence, nothing whatever was done.

MR. DILLON: I repeat that the Chief Secretary for Ireland, on behalf of the Government, said the meaning which the Government always attached to the phrase "treating all creditors alike" was that all creditors should be placed on equal terms, and was in the sense contemplated by the Bankruptcy Laws; and I distinctly stated in my reply that if the Government—and I invited them to do it—sketched for us the means of dealing simultaneously and absolutely with the debts of all creditors without bankruptcy, we would be willing to consider it with a view to its acceptance. I will leave that matter now, but I cannot pass from the observation made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham on this question. The right hon. Gentleman has sustained, and thoroughly sustained, his long and well-earned reputation for turning somersaults in politics. He is sure to change his mind every two or three months about the schemes connected with everything he touches, proposing a new one at frequent intervals and changing the principles to be applied to them. What did he say on the 19th August last when dealing with this very question? I had proposed an Amendment to the Bill of the Government, which Amendment proposed to carry out precisely the proposition made by the hon. Member for the City of Cork, and the right hon. Gentleman rose in his place and said—

> "I think the Government would do well to accept the Amendment proposed by the hon. Member for East Mayo, and to deal with the arrears of rent;"

thus protecting the tenants against unjust and improper action on the part of the landlords; but we have said distinctly that we are not prepared to do so, and therefore the House is bound to consider what alternative shall be adopted. I do not understand from the right hon. Gentleman's speech this day that he thinks the Government are wrong in their refusal last year. On the contrary, he rises to support the Amendment of his followers, that no Bill providing for a composition of arrears of rent will be satisfactory which does not at the same time deal with the tenants' debts to other creditors besides the landlords. It is very remarkable that, with all his past experience and his former declarations as to the principles which should guide the Government, he now assumes that all the opinions of the Nationalist Party, with its 85 Representatives in this House, of the majority of the tenant farmers, and also the opinions of the Irish Unionist Party, who represent the remainder of the tenant farmers of Ireland, are to count as nothing in the balance on an Irish question of this kind as compared with the united views of the "wise men of Birmingham." The right hon. Gentleman has laid down a perfectly novel principle—though it is not at all a surprising thing on his part—as regards the action of Courts of Law in respect to arrears of rent, should those powers be confided to them. Does the right hon. Gentleman entirely forget the case of the Scotch Crofter Commission which his Government took part in starting? Does he forget that the Scotch Crofter Commissioners have in many cases made reductions of 30, 40, and 60 per cent on the arrears, and in some instances wiped out many years' arrears altogether? The right hon. Gentleman has been in America for some months, and I suppose has been led to think and read as little about Ireland as possible; for he says the reductions of rents, according to which, in his opinion, the reduction of arrears should be made, have been lately only 14 or 15 per cent. Why, has the right hon. Gentleman been sleeping for the last six months? What about the reductions in the cases of leaseholders, the class most affected by this Bill? Is he not perfectly aware that the reductions in the cases of leaseholders would be more accurately described by 40 than by 14 per cent? And one of the most crying and greatest grievances is that the leaseholders who are admitted at the present time by the Legislature to have been paying unjust rents, as admitted by all sides of the House, should now be exterminated for non-payment of arrears of rent, which have just recently been declared by the Courts to be 40, 50, aye, 60 per cent higher than the rents that should justly have been demanded of them. Yet we are told by the right hon. Gentleman, who is so thoroughly acquainted with the condition of Ireland, that he undertakes to lay down the law for Ireland over the heads of all her Representatives—we are told by him that it is not possible that real relief can be given to the tenant in this way, because he cannot get more than 14 or 15 per cent reduction. What answer did he attempt to make to the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell), when he pointed out that in the loyal Province of Ulster, where they have got no Plan of Campaign, the tenants are just now being rewarded, as we always told them they would be—they are being mulcted not only in unjust rents, but, by the hundred, in those fraudulent and monstrous arrears, and are denied the benefit of the provisions which this House attempted to bring to their relief by the threats of evicting landlords, and they are deprived, if they dare to attempt to gain access to the Courts, of the benefits of the legislation of last year by those very arrears of rent which have been declared unjust. When I was listening to the hon. Member for South Tyrone, and listening to the remarkable case which he cited to this House in support of the Bill, I could not help being struck by the appositeness of that as an illustration of the effect of the Amendment, if it were carried, which the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. Chamberlain) rose in his place to support. Here were 100 tenants who desired to go into the Courts to have their rents adjusted. They were immediately met by legal processes, and the tenancies were threatened to be broken; being loyal Ulster tenants, and not having at their back the Plan of Campaign, or any of those "wicked" contrivances by which we have managed to protect the tenants in the South to a certain extent, they then offered—and will anyone in this House stand up and say their offer was not an honest one?—they offered to go into the bank and to raise upon that credit which you are seeking to destroy the money to pay the landlord, which I venture to say no just Judge would call upon them to pay—namely, the arrears of the rent which they now sought to get reduced by the Court. That was their offer, and it was more than a just offer. No honest landlord in England would have hesitated for a second to accept it. If the principle of the Amendment were accepted, those tenants would have to be deprived of their rights as they are now; but they never could have made that offer, because what bank in Ireland would advance 1*s*. on the credit of a tenant if they know that at any moment this House may be got to cut down that tenant's debts on the avowed principle that no regard will be had to the justice or injustice of the debts; but that, forsooth, because the man had had the misfortune to live under a cruel and rack-renting landlord, he should be denied his rights, and that every single creditor shall suffer not for his sake, but for the sake of the landowner. I say it, with the most perfect confidence, that if the people of this country, who have been taught the value and traditions of commercial honesty, were aware to-morrow of the principle of the Amendment, the principle of the measure which the Government tried to shove through that House last year by threats and by coercion, and the principle which underlies this Amendment, they would rise up and denounce it. I take as a statement of that principle the most remarkable words used by the noble Marquess the Member for the Rossendale Division of Lancashire (the Marquess of Hartington) in summing up and concluding the debate on this question. He said—

> "I do not think that the proposal was distinctly put by the hon. Member for East Mayo. I understood the hon. Member to say that he would propose to place the debts of the landlord and all other creditors on equal terms, and that only such debts should be dealt with as came into Court."

The proposal I made was that as each creditor came into Court, the Court should have power to adjudicate on his debt, having regard to the justice of that individual case. But now listen to what the noble Marquess laid down as the proposal of the Government—

> "What his right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham suggested was that if a tenant came into Court for a reduction, he should be compelled to make a return of his indebtedness generally, and that all his creditors should submit to an equal reduction."

I venture to say that in the annals of civilized society such a proposal was never adopted. How would that work in Ireland? Take the case of a rack-rented estate where all the tenants were in arrear, you will always find, if you inquire in this matter, that the tenants go on paying as long as they are able to pay. ["No, no!"] Well, at all events, in loyal Ulster they go on paying the landlord as long as they are able. Suppose, now, the principle was adopted of reducing the debts without any regard to the honesty or dishonesty of the case, and I shall put now the case of a dishonest tenant. A man goes into the bank and gets a bill for £10 or £20 to pay something on account of his rent, knowing that he will never be able to repay it. He is then brought into Court by the landlord, and the Court decides on a reduction of 50 per cent on his debt, and no discretion being allowed to the Court, 50 per cent is knocked off the Bill of the bank though hard money was paid for it; and the trader who sold him manure, or who sold him food through the spring months, when the tenants of the West of Ireland are always half starving, must all suffer without any regard to the justice or injustice of the dealing with the landlord, simply because the landlord chances to be a rack-renter. I say a more grotesque proposition was never laid before Parliament; and if the people of this country could be got to understand what we were compelled to submit to last Session, they would condemn both the hon. Member for the City of Cork and myself for what we accepted. But we never had a free choice, and, for myself, I never hesitated for a moment as to our position on the matter, if we had a free choice. We were driven up into a corner, and bullied from one Court to the other, until we had to agree to a new policy. We were told that the operation of the Coercion Act would be laid to our charge if we did not yield to this dishonest arrangement. We are told that we are the champions of the shopkeepers in Ireland. We are the champions of honesty in Ireland. Those men cast their reproach to us across the floor of the House that we were encouraging the people of Ireland not to pay their just debts. But they knew that that reproach was unjustifiable. Also, when they said that the Irish people were unwilling to discharge their lawful obligations. I have never encouraged the people of Ireland not to pay their just debts. I have always said, and I defy the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson) to quote a single extract from a speech of mine made in

England or Ireland, in which I did not advise the people to pay their just debts, and only to hesitate when they were dealing with debts which the wisdom of the Legislature has declared to be unjust debts. We are accused of being the champions of the gombeen man; but the gombeen man has ceased to exist in Ireland, except in the imagination of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. The gombeen man—the curse of Ireland—is now unknown, and the gombeen man has been swept out of existence by the agitation I and my friends have supported. ["No, no!"] Yes, he is. He perhaps lingers in loyal Ulster. If so, he is one of the blessed institutions which loyal Ulster is careful to preserve; but I can answer for Connaught and Munster, and I can tell you that the gombeen man has no power in those districts; he has, in fact, ceased to exist. Can the right hon. Gentleman or any hon. Member produce a petition from the people of Ireland to be preserved from the gombeen man? He will not give them anything in the shape of the assistance they need. Last year we were perfectly sound in the principle—when we did consent to this at all—in the principle which we laid down, that these debts should be treated only as they turned up. It has been one of the marked features of this debate that the interests of the Irish shopkeepers and of the Irish landlord are totally and absolutely different, that the justice of their demands are different, and so are also their proceedings. Why so? I will tell you why. The Irish shopkeeper has to live in Ireland among the people—the Irish shopkeeper cannot afford to do what the Irish landlord does. He does not depend for his existence on the 14,000 armed police which are employed in Ireland to preserve the landlord system. He depends for his existence upon the people of Ireland. The needs of the landlords of Ireland are totally different to those of the people of Ireland. When the times are bad, the shopkeeper has to suffer with his people, and he has got to wait, and very often to wait long, for his money. In the chief Southern Provinces of Ireland there are not any cases in which the shopkeepers have put men out of their homes, unless in the most gross and outrageous cases of dishonesty and drunkenness—cases where every honest man would do the same—but I say that such cases as those in which shopkeepers have put pressure on the tenants, and harried them, and deprived them of the means of keeping their homes, can be counted upon the fingers, and are practically unknown. They cannot be pointed out. The truth is, that the relief coming from the Member for South Birmingham (Mr. Powell-Williams), which no one asks for, is a relief utterly at variance with every principle of civilized government and ordinary commerce that should prevail among people. The Representatives of Ireland are told that the House will not give the relief that they ask for to the Irish tenants, because they do not ask for relief against debts for necessaries or for money lent. In that I think the House is asked to consent to a most dangerous principle. If a Member representing some poor constituency in England or Scotland or Wales brings a Bill in to-morrow, declaring that every man who comes before the County Court Judge must get his debts cut down——

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: That is the law.

Mr. DILLON: It is not the law.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I beg the hon. Member's pardon. I ought to know, because it was I who introduced the clauses to which I am referring. There are clauses known as the County Court Clauses, under which a small debtor coming before a County Court Judge is required by the Court to give a schedule of all his debts to the Court, and the Court, in certain cases, may make an order for his relief by a composition payable at once or in instalments and without all the expensive proceedings which are necessary in ordinary cases of insolvency.

Mr. DILLON: I do not pretend to be as learned in the Bankruptcy Law of England as the right hon. Gentleman is, but I leave to hon. Members who have nothing more to do than the introduction of that law, and I doubt very much whether the application of the Bankruptcy Law of England would meet the Irish case—I am extremely doubtful of that—and if it does not there is absolutely no point whatever in the observation of the right hon. Gentleman. I am not ashamed to say that I am not thoroughly acquainted with the English Bankruptcy Law; however, what I want now to direct the attention of the

House to is this—the extraordinary character of the way in which the opposition to this Bill has been conducted. If the hon. Member for South Birmingham, who moved the Amendment, had adopted the tone of the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh, I could understand it, and if he had met this Bill by a direct negative, and said that no grievance existed, I could have understood that course; but what have they done? They have adopted a course which I venture to say is unparalleled in the history of Parliamentary life, at least, which I never recollect to have been followed before. A grievance is stated and pressed upon the attention of Parliament by the Representatives of a country, and the Government do not deny the existence of the grievance; they do not deny that the grievance is urgent, and no Party in the House that I know of, except the small Party following the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh, denies that the grievance exists, and that it is a pressing grievance, and yet we are met by an Amendment which declares that this grievance will not be remedied unless we remedy some other grievances of which existence is very doubtful. If they have views of their own upon the matter, why do not the Government, as they admit the grievance, introduce a measure dealing with the matter from their own point of view? Better far, in my opinion,—why do not they introduce two small measures, a couple of clauses in each would be enough—one dealing with the grievance from the point of view of the people of Ireland, and another dealing with the grievance that the Irish people have not put forward, but which the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Birmingham has discovered. They would find that the Bill dealing with this great question from the Irish point of view would have a very easy passage through the House, and they might at their leisure have a discussion of the proposal of the wise men of Birmingham. I can promise them it will receive due consideration at the hands of Irish Members. I do not think it is necessary for me to say anything more on this question. I could, however, say a great deal more, for the case is one of excessive urgency. The facts of the case have been so well put already by my hon. Friend the Member for the City of Cork and by the Member for South Tyrone, that I do not think anything remains for me to say to the speech of the hon. Member for South Birmingham, who moved the Amendment. I listened attentively, and I am bound to say a speech displaying more gross and profound ignorance of the Irish people I have never heard, and I must say it seems to me that it ought to lie somewhat heavily on his conscience, that a man who professed to maintain the Union between the two countries, as does the hon. Member for South Birmingham, should be the promoter of an Amendment, dealing with a vital question in the interests of the Irish people, without having got the information which it was his duty to obtain, for he made a speech in relation to that Amendment which demonstrated to every Irishman—be he Tory, Unionist or Nationalist—that he had not taken the trouble to endeavour to master the question into which he was going to plunge. Every single sentence of the hon. Gentleman's speech showed his gross and profound ignorance of Irish affairs, and of the condition of the Irish people. He had not a fact, he had not a single statement, to show that there was any demand in favour of his Amendment. He spoke of the condition of Ireland in words that would have applied, perhaps, with some degree of force 15 years ago, but which have absolutely no application to the present case; and I say if any illustration were wanted of the deplorable condition of Ireland as regards legislation, we could not have a better illustration than that supplied by the readiness of the hon. Gentleman in undertaking to overthrow this great proposed settlement in the spirit of ignorance and lightness which he has displayed. I say in conclusion, without in the least degree proposing to make any threat to this House, that they will do well to consider before they vote on this matter, whether they will not drive the tenants of Ulster, whose condition we have heard described by the Member for South Tyrone, into adopting the same methods which we have found successful in the South of Ireland; and if hon. Members tell me that some of these notices of eviction are not going to be carried out, I can tell them why they are not. Because I myself have killed 300 of them by holding back the rents of the landlords until they withdrew the notices and reinstated the tenants. I will tell the people of Ulster, and the hon. Member for South Tyrone, a little secret practised to the West of the Shannon, which has proved effectual in many instances, and you had better beware——[*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Hon. Gentlemen might listen to what I say before they interrupt, because it is not so terrible. What I am going to say is those of you who value the Union, take care you do not strain the loyalty of Ulster too far.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): That part of the speech of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) which was not devoted to venting his wrath on the various Members for Birmingham who support the Union, was chiefly occupied in discussing and rediscussing the two proposals which were before the House last year—namely, that of the Government, which was accurately described by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), and the extraordinary proposal which was substituted in lieu of it by the hon. Member for East Mayo. I do not propose to follow the hon. Gentleman into the details of his survey of the argument. I think it will be manifest to the House now, as it was then, that the proposal under which the creditors are not to be all treated simultaneously cannot be a proposal under which they can properly be said to be treated alike. The most elementary knowledge of bankruptcy law, or of that which has any analogy to it, ought to have instructed the hon. Member that the very essence of any such proposal must be that all creditors are treated on a similar footing. The truth is, that the hon. Gentleman has not the most elementary knowledge of bankruptcy law. He declared that a principle of an equal reduction of debt was one wholly unknown in any civilized country. The fact was there is no civilized country where it is not perfectly well known. There is no civilized country where it is not the essence of every law of bankruptcy, or of every law analogous to bankruptcy, and under no such law does the Bankruptcy Judge ever think of looking into the origin of the debt, or of discussing its equity or inequity. If you are always to go back to the origin of the debt——

MR. DILLON: I made no such absurd statement. What I said, and what I adhere to was, that in no country in the civilized world is there a law under which all debts are reduced equally in consequence of the injustice of one debt.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Nobody has ever before in this House proposed to give relief to a tenant upon such equitable grounds. We never made any such proposal to the House. The very essence of the proposal the Government made to the House was not founded on the equity or the inequity of the debt, but on whether the debtor could qualify for relief by being able to show that it was not by his own act or fault that he was unable to meet his liabilities; and its object was not to distinguish between creditors, but to enable the debtor to pursue his course, with profit to himself and to the community, by relieving him of the load of debt which at present strangled every effort he might make. The hon. Gentleman has based the whole of his speech upon the theory that the debts due to the landlord are inequitable, and he based this theory, as did also the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell), upon the fact that Parliament has interfered with the contracts between landlords and tenants and has not interfered with the contracts between shopkeepers and customers. I deny that the interference of Parliament is any proof that those debts are unjust. It is a proof that in the opinion of Parliament the contracts between landlords and tenants could not be left in Ireland, as they are left in England, to the uncontrolled operation of the law of supply and demand. It proves that that was the opinion of Parliament, and it proves nothing else whatever; nor can I admit that the debts due to landlords are in any sense necessarily or even probably unjust.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon. Perhaps he will allow me to explain. I did not say that the debt was necessarily unjust because Parliament had interfered, but that I held it to be necessarily unjust because the Court had determined it to be so.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I quite appreciate the hon. Gentleman's point, and I am quite prepared to argue it on that basis. I think the House may be disposed to regard this question in a more unbiassed spirit if it considers what the Courts in Ireland have done. The Lands Court in Ireland fixed judicial rents in 1881, 1882, and 1883. In 1885 prices fell, and they fell all through 1885 and 1886, and the result was that the rent which the tenant could easily pay in the earlier years he could not pay, or could not pay with equal facility, in the later years of his judicial lease; and hon. Gentlemen say that, because last year we gave the Court power to reduce rents, we therefore decided that the rents were unfair. Now, let us suppose a converse case to that which I have just stated. Let us suppose the case of a rise instead of a fall in prices, and let us suppose that the tenant was making a much larger profit in the later years than he was making in the earlier years. Would the tenant, in the opinion of Members opposite, in that case be robbing the landlord or not? A lease invariably contemplates an average line above and below which it is positively certain the profits will rise and fall. If you have a 15 years' judicial term, is there a single man who is acquainted with the elements of agriculture who does not know that in certain years the tenant will make more profit and in others he will make less profit than is contemplated by the average on which the lease is based? Are we, then, to say that in the years he makes less profit the landlord is exacting an unjust rent? If we do adopt that extravagant proposition, ought we not also to say that in the years in which the tenant is making a larger profit he is robbing the landlord? That, Sir, disposes, I think, of the argument as to the inequity of these rents and the exceptional character they possess. Now, I want to call the attention of the House to another point connected with these shopkeepers' and landlords' debts. I say that every man who recollects the debate that took place with regard to the Act of 1881 is aware that that Act gave over to the tenants of Ireland a certain amount of property which was formerly vested in the landlords. The authors of that measure invariably defended it in their arguments with the landlords by saying—"It is true we have diminished the amount of your property, but we have increased the security for what remains." The honour of Parliament and of this House was distinctly pledged to the landlords of Ireland, and it was then stated that the tenant right of the tenant should be the security for the payment of the judicially fixed rents; and, therefore, when I hear hon. Gentlemen getting up in this House and saying that not only are these rents unjust rents, but that actually the debt of the landlord is to be placed in a far worse position than that of any other creditor. I cannot help thinking that they are rashly advocating a policy which cannot easily be made consistent with the honour of this House or with the pledge solemnly given to the landlords by Parliament. So far, my argument has dealt entirely with the judicial tenants. I will now call the attention of the House to the condition of those tenants who have not had rents fixed judicially. Have they any equitable claim at this moment to exceptional relief? What is the history of the non-judicial tenants in Ireland? They have been given, and have had, since 1881, the option of getting a fair rent fixed in the Land Courts. In 1882 their arrears were wiped off, and therefore they started at that date with a clean bill of health, so to speak. Directly they found prices falling, and that their rents, which had been reasonable before, were ceasing to be so, they had it in their power to go to the Land Court and say, "Fix our rents according to the new state of prices." But they did not do so, and if under such circumstances they have allowed a large amount of arrears to accumulate, how can we say that that is the fault of the landlord? How can they come to this House and complain. When I heard the hon. Member for East Mayo ask this House how they could vote for this Amendment without carrying out a similar policy in England and Scotland, I confess I thought he might have recollected that the whole of the legislation in favour of the Irish tenants has no analogy in any country; and I hold that whether we ought to bring in a Bill or not, at all events the argumentative ground put forward for this Bill, does not really bear critical examination for a moment. I now come to the question of the policy of the proposal of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), and here I must ask him, does he seriously suppose that this Bill, if passed into law, would settle the Irish Land Question? [Mr. PARNELL: "No."] But the whole peroration of the hon. Member's speech amounted to this—

> "The fact that you reject a Bill which will settle the Irish Land Question shows how utterly incapable you are of legislating for Ireland at Westminster."

If the hon. Gentleman supposes that this proposal would go any measurable length towards settling the Irish Land Question, I must inform him that he is entirely and absolutely mistaken. The hon. Gentleman the Member for South Tyrone stated that the English democracy would always support just evictions. I believe the English democracy would always do so were they acquainted with all the facts of the case. I want to know from the hon. Gentleman, with his very large experience of what people think in the various parts of the country, what, in his opinion, are the circumstances connected with evictions which have chiefly moved the imagination of the masses in this country? [Mr. T. W. Russell: Bodyke.] Have they gone into the details of the manner in which the debts, to recover which the evictions took place, were contracted? No, Sir, they have not. Hon. Gentlemen have got up resistance to the law. They have taken care that doors should be built up, that houses should be fortified, and that boiling water should be poured upon the police. But while they have taken care that there should be every method of resistance to the law adopted which ingenuity can suggest, they also have taken care that every circumstance, from the eviction of the bedridden crone specially imported for the occasion direct, which lends itself to the dramatic narratives in which hon. Gentlemen so freely indulge, should occur in order that they excite the pity and inflame the imagination of the English people. I say that if the proposals in the Bill of the hon. Member were carried out, the amount of arrears affected would be so small and the amount of outstanding arrears would be so large that they would still ultimately lead to evictions, and you would not get over the difficulty which hon. Gentlemen profess to be so desirous of getting over—a desire in which I heartily concur. Whom would this proposal relieve? It would leave outstanding, on the smallest estimate, three-fourths of the arrears of rent. Therefore, the Bill, instead of stopping, might lead to evictions——

MR. T. M. HEALY: Will the right hon. Gentleman show how that is to be done?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If the hon. and learned Member will allow me to develop my argument in peace I will show that the Bill under debate would relieve very few tenants indeed. It would be impossible to prove before the Courts that the arrears of the tenant did not arise through any act or default of his own, and if the tenant could not prove that, he could not get any relief at all. The clause of the hon. Member's Bill would not be applicable to many cases that would arise.

MR. PARNELL: The clause is founded on the right hon. Gentleman's own Act of last year, and under Section 30 of that Act, before the equitable jurisdiction can be exercised in favour of any tenant, he must show that his indebtedness is due to no "act or default" on his part. Those are also the words of this Bill.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Gentleman has entirely misapprehended my argument. I know well that the hon. Member's Bill is based on the equitable clause of our Act of last Session, which only gives relief in cases where a tenant can prove that his indebtedness is not due to his own act and default. My point is that the number of those who would be able to prove this will be but a small fraction of those who are in arrears, and that the great majority of the tenants in arrears would not be relieved at all by this Bill. For instance, I cannot conceive that any Judge would think of releasing or relieving tenants under the Bill of the hon. Gentleman who had joined the Plan of Campaign. They would be absolutely excluded. [An hon. MEMBER: Why?] Because the essence of the Plan of Campaign is that tenants on an estate should combine together—those who could pay in full and those who could not—and pay a certain proportion of the rent due to a receiver. They were thus prevented from making any individual settlement with their landlord. Surely persons who entered into such a combination would not come within this Bill if it were to become law? This was one point which showed how inadequate the Bill would be to deal with existing arrears. I know a case of an estate on which the tenants have not paid a sixpence of rent since 1881. I have no doubt they have spent the money that ought to have gone towards paying their rent, and it is probably true that at the present time they are unable to pay the arrears. But these men could not prove that their present indebtedness is not due to their own act or default. It is due to their having joined in a combination against the payment of rent, and they and many like them would receive no relief under the Bill of the hon. Member for Cork. If the object of the Bill be to stay evictions, I think it will have very little effect, for under the Bill of last year, which enables the County Court Judge to spread the payment of arrears over a number of years where the tenant shows that his indebtedness is not due to his own act or default, the Judges have only exercised this discretion in one quarter of the cases that have come before them, and it may be assumed that the proportion of cases in which, under this Bill, the Judge would exercise this discretion to wipe out the arrears altogether would be still less. I pass now to another point, and ask what necessity is there for this Bill? Hon. Gentlemen opposite have, I think, in this connection, indulged in very extravagant rhetoric. The hon. Member for South Tyrone has spoken of "an April shower of notices," which would, according to his peculiar meteorology result in a storm of evictions in November. Of the 3,000 notices to which he has referred, I believe that by far the greater portion of them were in consequence of ejectments obtained before the Act of last year. The period of grace on these notices expired about the 1st of January; on the 1st of January it was in the power of every landlord who had issued one of these notices to have evicted his tenant upon whom such notice had been served.

An Hon. Member: Seven months and two weeks before an eviction can take place.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Member is mistaken. If decrees be issued in October the landlord can dispossess the tenant on the 1st of January. Now this being the legal power of the landlords, I cannot make out that any landlord has exercised that power. I have made inquiries, and I can only find half-a-dozen cases in which a landlord has availed himself of this power.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: They are waiting for the expiration of the period of redemption.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: At any rate, this shows that the landlords are at the present moment not evicting, and that there are no indications that they are not desirous to do more than is necessary to recover their just debts. Under the old process of law there have been 66 tenants turned out, and the mention of this fact reminds me of a statement made by the hon. Member for East Mayo. He said that in his whole experience of Ireland—and he has taunted us and the hon. Gentlemen the Members for West and South Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain and Mr. Powell-Williams) with our ignorance of Ireland—he could count on the fingers of his two hands the number of cases in which ordinary creditors had turned a tenant out of his holding. Well, I do not know how many fingers the hon. Gentleman has, but of these 66 cases 18 were cases of tenants turned out by other creditors.

Mr. DILLON: Can you give me their names? In what part of Ireland?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot say.

Mr. DILLON: I distinctly stated that I could not speak for the Province of Ulster.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: These statistics then show that there is no disposition on the part of landlords harshly to exercise the power of eviction. But I go much further. I have also inquired into the action of landlords with regard to their leaseholders, whose case is probably the hardest of all, and who, year after year, were refused any redress by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. I cannot find out that at this moment there is a single landlord who is asking his tenants who have been leaseholders to pay a larger amount of arrears than would be now due if the Bill of last year had been antedated two years —in other words, if the Act had been passed when the fall of prices commenced.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: But the Act has kept them out of Court.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have no evidence of its doing so. The hon. Member quoted in his speech a case which he said occurred in the County Louth. He mentioned that case a few days ago at the meeting of his own Party. I heard of it, and accordingly made inquiries, and I shall be glad if after this debate the hon. Gentleman will show me the letter on which he bases his statement. I will then make further investigation. I heard the name of the person whom he mentioned at the meeting, but, upon inquiry, I cannot make out that anyone of that name or of any name like it has been guilty of any act which, even by any misunderstanding or misconstruction, could be alleged to be an act of harshness such as that which he has detailed to the House. The hon. Member only brought forward this one case of hardship, and he has searched all Ireland, I suppose, for such cases. He has only found one, and I believe that on examination even this one will prove to be based on a misunderstanding. Now, I ask any Gentleman acquainted with Ireland whether, for every case of hardship inflicted by a landlord, you cannot find 20, 50, nay 100, cases of unjust dealing on the part of the tenants. I say that the difficulties in Ireland are more due to the tenant than to the landlord. I say emphatically that you will find case after case in which landlords have been brought to the verge of ruin, have been subjected to the most cruel sufferings, combinations on the part of their tenants which no human being could justify. If you mean to reopen this Land Question in an arrears Bill, is it not worth considering whether you ought not at the same time that you introduce provisions for relieving the tenants of the debts which hang round their necks like millstones—whether you ought not to make some provision to compel tenants to execute the elementary obligations which they have incurred towards their landlords. I listened with profound regret to that part of the speech of the hon. Member for South Tyrone in which he denounced the Irish landlords.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: I only denounced what I called the worst phase of Irish landlordism.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Member expressed in his speech a very natural regret at the proceeding which he was about to take against the Party and the Government whom he supports. I can assure the hon. Member I shall offer no reproach to him. I am perfectly aware that he has been guided by most conscientious motives in all that he has done; but I think he would have been well advised had he refrained from joining in these vague rhetorical attacks upon a class who surely are low enough in the world now, and who are not merely the victims of their past folly, and, in some cases possibly, of their past errors, but who are enduring the onslaughts of men who are only attacking them because they think that it is through them that the Union between England and Ireland can be most easily assailed. All the information that I have been able to collect leads me to the belief that at this moment the landlords of Ireland, with exceptions which might actually and not merely rhetorically be counted upon the fingers of both hands, would gladly accept the proportion of the arrears which the hon. Member would desire to see them receive. You may search Ireland from North to South, from East to West, and few indeed would be those landlords who would not grasp at the terms of the hon. Member, and who would not gladly receive, in lieu of the debts owed them by their tenants, such a proportion of their arrears as would have been their due had the Act of last year been passed in 1885. Not only that, but the landlords would gladly accept, and are every day accepting, terms far worse; and if we are to put in opposite scales the action of the tenant and the action of the landlord, I am convinced that every equitable tribunal would decide at this moment that, whatever may have been the case in the past, and to whatever cause the existing state of things may be attributed, the chief sinners are not the landlords, but the tenants. If I may, I will refer to certain characteristic cases. In a case tried in bankruptcy before Judge Boyd, it appeared that the tenants of an estate, now in the hands of a receiver, owed from five to six years' judicial rent—in fact, they had paid no rent since the judicial rents were fixed. The Judge said that the documents before him showed that the tenants must have combined together to pay no rent for six years. Here again is a letter received by the Land Commission in reply to a demand for three years' instalments of tithe rent-charge. The landlord writes—

> "I have for the first time been compelled to borrow from a friend a small sum of money for the maintenance of my household. The sum total received by me of my property since October, 1887, is £11 10*s*., and the arrears on the 25th instant will amount to more than £3,600."

Here are some facts relating to the Glenbeigh estate. They are contributed by the agent—

> "Michael Grady's yearly rental is £10. The amount due when he was evicted was £28. The landlord is willing to take £8 and to reinstate him. He has five head of cattle."

Here are two other cases—

> "Thomas Quirke's rental was £13 12*s*.; a very large amount is due. The landlord has paid rates for some years. He offered to take £6 16*s*. Quirke has 17 head of cattle, a horse and cart, and a pig. Another man, also named Quirke, was rented at £7 10*s*. In November, 1887, £52 was due. The landlord offered to take a small sum, to reduce the rent, and not to ask for costs."

It appears that the evicted tenants have from five to 17 head of cattle each. There is a fund for their relief, and it is distributed quarterly; and the agent says that many of the people who have been re-admitted as caretakers complain of the leniency of their treatment, because, in consequence, they do not receive any of the money subscribed by the League. In the case of an estate under a receiver, the tenants who owed one-and-a-half year's rent refused to meet him, and expected to be excused 80 per cent of the rental owing. They also intimated that they would only continue to remain tenants if 90 per cent of their former rent were conceded. I could multiply such cases indefinitely. My point is this—if you really mean to deal with the whole of the Irish Land Question, ought you not, while relieving the tenants of their load of obligation, to take some steps to prevent the recurrence of these iniquitous refusals to pay rent? I would sum up by reminding the House that what we are asked by the hon. Member for Cork to do is to interfere with the course of law in the case of a debt secured by special Parliamentary provision, but to leave untouched debts contracted under no such sanction and under no such security, and this at a time when the landlords of Ireland are showing a disposition not only to act justly, but leniently and even generously, towards their tenants, and at a time, too, when illegal combinations exist among the tenants to refuse the payment of just rent and of just arrears. I say that equity is not satisfied by this proposal of the hon. Member for Cork, nor is policy. It removes neither a theoretical nor a practical grievance; but it does enforce the evil lesson which, whatever its other merits may be, your legislation of the last eight years has impressed upon the Irish people—the evil lesson that the worst policy for a tenant is to be honest, and that the best policy is to be dishonest, and that prosperity is not the result of skill, of industry, and of temperance, but the result of dexterous Parliamentary manipulation and of unscrupulous popular agitation.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): The House has just listened to a speech of an extraordinary character. To use a phrase introduced by the late Sir Stafford Northcote, the hon. Member for South Birmingham who has moved the Amendment (Mr. Powell-Williams) has acted as a "bonnet" for the Government, and yet the Government have not said a word about the Amendment.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he had stated that the Government entirely adhered to the views expressed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) last year as to the advantage of relieving tenants in respect of all their debts.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Do you accept the Amendment, then? That is what we want to know. Do I understand that the Government are going to vote for the Amendment? I think we are entitled to an answer from the Government on that point.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Certainly.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Then I am surprised the right hon. Gentleman did not say a few words in defence of that Amendment, for his speech from first to last is an attack on the Amendment. The proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham is more sweeping than ours. But we are told by the Government that the country is one mass of dishonesty, and yet, while Ireland is in that state, not only are the debts of the landlords to be wiped out, but debts of every other description also; and I presume the Income Tax is to be swept away too. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary showed some dexterity in steering clear of the proposal from Birmingham. Were the Government going to spread more widely the demoralization they denounced? The position of the Mover of the Amendment was that "Codlin's the friend, not Short." If hon. Gentlemen opposite consider the Bill apart from Party spirit, they will see that no more moderate Bill was ever proposed to the House. If it were as dishonest as it was alleged to be, if the promoters said—"We will rob the landlord because he is hateful to us," then I could understand the opposition to the Bill; but the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary attacked it because of its moderation. It does not go far enough for him, because he says it will only relieve tenants who have got embarrassed through no wrong or default of their own. It is honest tenants only he says that will be relieved, and that does not suit the wild imagination of the right hon. Gentleman. He wants the dishonest to be relieved; he wants tenants who adopted the Plan of Campaign to be relieved. Was that a reasonable way of dealing with the Bill? Our proposal is to submit to your own Judges who sat on your Benches before the last six months — Judge Holmes and Judge Gibson—when a landlord issued a writ from the Queen's Bench Division the right of saying whether the writ should be proceeded with or not, and whether the tenant was acting dishonestly or otherwise. That is not an extreme proposal, and yet it is found fault with by Her Majesty's Government, because, forsooth, it does not go far enough. Let me remind English Gentlemen what they will do if they vote against the proposal of my hon. Friend. They will vote for a still wider proposal. Remember you are not going to vote that the Irish tenants should not have relief—you are going to vote for a far more sweeping proposal. The great Conservative Party are now going to declare that a system is to be established whereby every debt, honest or dishonest, should be wiped away—that every creditor is to be asked to go into Court and to have every debt due to him wiped out because a certain creditor proceeds against a debtor. I should have thought that the ozone of the ocean would have relieved the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) of a little of his bankruptcy on the brain. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham says that under a section of his Bankruptcy Bill creditors may get relief under circumstances which consist, as I understand him, in bringing in hotchpotch the assets of the debtor.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: That is the proposal the Government made. Clause 22, although analogous to the proposal of the Government, has not, and never has been, represented as the proposal of the Government.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Then there was no sense in the interruption of my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) by the right hon. Gentleman. The whole point of the case of my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo was we were willing to accept—much as we disliked it, and though we thought it a monstrous thing for this House to force us to do—we were willing to accept a proposal whereby all debts would be considered by the Court; but we were not prepared to accept the scheme of the Government under which every single creditor, no matter who he might be, could plunge the tenant into universal bankruptcy, and that is the point now. In the Bankruptcy Section tenants assets are available; but what is the case of the Government? They say no, the tenant's assets are not to be claimed; his land is to remain to him. That being so, the right hon. Gentleman, when we were offered last year a bankruptcy proposal——

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he denied that it was a bankruptcy proposal.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: The House has ears, and what was read out by my hon. Friend shows it was a bankruptcy proposal. Here is the remark of my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo as reported in *Hansard* on the 6th August last year—

> "Mr. Dillon: Nothing of the sort. I distinctly said, and so did my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), we made an offer—that is, a definite offer—by which the debts of all creditors should be placed on an equal footing."—(3 *Hansard*, [318] 1483.)

That was the offer of last year, and the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland said that nothing would be granted except under a scheme of bankruptcy.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said, what the Government always said was, that they would accept some scheme of treatment analogous in some respects to bankruptcy, but no doubt differing from bankruptcy in some respects.

MR. T. M. HEALY: It is due to the right hon. Gentleman to say that he did not insist upon the word. What he insisted upon was the thing. What we want is to understand the proposal of Her Majesty's Government. We have the Executive Government of this country voting for the abstract Resolution that the debts of all tenants in Ireland should be placed on the same footing and dealt with by some system of bankruptcy, and they do not tell us what the scheme is. We ask what have the Government up their sleeves? They have hinted along with this that they will devise some means by which dishonest tenants can be made to pay, so that there is apparently some scheme hatching between the Birmingham section of Her Majesty's supporters and themselves. We ask what is it they intend? Are we to vote in the dark? The Government are going to take their Supporters into the Lobby to vote for this abstract Resolution without telling us in the least degree what their proposal is. The Government are pinned to action, they are pinned to the declaration as to the necessity of some legislation. Their Amendment declares in favour of it, and we are entitled to press the Government as to what they intend to do. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham says the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), however, has great powers of preventing any scheme being dealt with, because he will give us relentless opposition. We are not prepared to pledge ourselves in advance to a scheme for or against. We say let the Government produce the scheme. The responsibility is on the Executive Government of the country. It is for the Government, who declare the necessity for a particular class of legislation, to produce it, and we ought not to be called upon, at the beck or call of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, to say whether we will support or oppose any proposal until we know what it really is. We have got to this length, that there is to be some proposal by the Government, and the right hon. Member for West Birmingham expects us to say we will support it in advance. I decline to do so. We know there is to be a scheme, and we want to know what it is going to be. For my part I do not see the least use in continuing a debate in the spirit adopted by hon. Gentlemen opposite going into the grievances of Irish landlords, and defending their action. It was rather surprising to me with regard to the 3,500 eviction notices down to January to find the right hon. Gentleman seemed to think it a matter of slight importance that three months had elapsed since that time, and he did not even take the trouble to ascertain how many had been issued since. We may, therefore, take it that at least 5,000 have been issued. We are told the landlords are not pressing to act on them. Why are they not? Because the tenants have lost their title, and they are no longer tenants. They are turned into caretakers, and the landlord can evict them at his leisure. We do not know why the landlords are not pressing. They may not be getting sufficient police, and the Government may be waiting. But we know that the landlords would be acting foolishly if they did evict now, for no landlord is such a fool as to evict his tenant while his time of redemption was running. The tenant might get money in the meantime to pay, and the landlord would have to put him back in the holding and to account in the same way as a mortgagee for the assets. The landlords will wait till the time of redemption is up, and you will have to wait for the ripeness of that time to see what course the landlords will really adopt. There is little use in the course the Government are now taking. They are now going to pledge themselves in this Amendment as to the necessity for some legislation, and we ask some responsible Minister to say on behalf of the Government what is the scheme they intend to pledge themselves to. You all say a scheme of some sort is necessary, and we ask you to produce it.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): I know the House is anxious to get to a decision, and I will not detain it long; but I believe that the decision on this Bill will be a very critical decision in the future history of Ireland. We told you that two years ago, with reference to the former proposal of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell), and you would not believe us then. You thought that you could thrust it aside. You thought that by denouncing the Irish tenants by the use of such language as we heard in the peroration of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) you could get rid of the question of reductions of unjust rent in Ireland. Well, you failed. You had a majority then, as you will have a majority to-day; but you did not get rid of the question by your majority. You had the support then of the bulk of the Gentlemen who call themselves Liberal Unionists; but, in spite of that, you were compelled to reduce judicial rents. Now, do you really believe that you are going to get rid of this question of arrears by the majority which you will record this afternoon? What is the situation in which the House is placed by this Amendment? No doubt, the speech of the Chief Secretary for Ireland was a speech of "no surrender" upon any terms. It is true that allusions have been made as to the willingness which the Government expressed last year to do something in a vague and hazy way under the pressure which was brought to bear upon them by Devonshire House. Yes; but the pressure of Devonshire House is growing weaker and weaker every day in this direction. What was the result of the pressure of Devonshire House last year? The Government introduced the Bankruptcy Clauses into the Bill of last year; but those clauses, of which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) is so enamoured, were universally repudiated—repudiated by the Irish landlords, by the Irish tenants, by the Liberal Party, and by the Conservative Party, and they were dropped by the Government. What was the course taken by Devonshire House? It was a demand for the settlement of the arrears question exactly upon the terms now contended for by the hon. Member for the City of Cork. Why, that was conceded in an Amendment by the hon. and learned Member for Inverness (Mr. Finlay). It was also included in the Bill which bears the names of the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell), the hon. Member for Derry County (Mr. Lea), and the hon. and learned Member for Inverness—all Members of the Devonshire House Party—aye, and it was even included in a Bill bearing the name of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings); and now we have the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham denouncing the scheme which had the support of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division. Well, then, the measure before us to-day is practically the same measure which was determined upon by the Liberal Unionists at Devonshire House last year, and which was to be substituted for the Bankruptcy Clauses of the Land Bill. Is it possible, then, for anything to be more ridiculous than this Amendment, which strikes at the Bill of the hon. Member for South Tyrone as much as it strikes at the Bill of the hon. Member for the City of Cork, should be attacked upon the ground and upon the principles set forth by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham and the Chief Secretary for Ireland? Now, what does my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham say? He says—"I admit there is a grievance—that if the rents were exorbitant, the arrears are exorbitant also, and ought not to be enforced;" but what is the course under those circumstances that my right hon. Friend takes? There is the Bill produced by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of Cork, and there is the Bill proposed by the hon. Member for South Tyrone meeting that grievance. How does my right hon. Friend deal with it? We have this Amendment; we know the hand; it is the hand of Esau. We know very well where this Amendment comes from. The right hon. Gentleman destroys by an Amendment the only practical measure dealing with the grievance that he admits, and then he says he is extremely glad that the Government are not going to introduce any measure to deal with that grievance. Is that the manner in which my right hon. Friend expects to pacify Ireland? Is that the way in which he expects to strengthen the Union in Ireland? Admitting there is a grievance in respect of these arrears, my right hon. Friend destroys the only measure which proposes to remedy the grievance; and he advises the Government to introduce no Bill for the purpose of removing the grievance. What will the effect be on the minds of the Irish people? Either that the English House of Commons cannot, or that it will not, deal with the admitted grievances of Ireland. A remarkable thing has been noticed in this debate. The Unionist Party seems to lose no opportunity of identifying themselves with the landlords of Ireland. They take every opportunity of making everybody in this House, and out of it, believe that to them the question of the Union is the question of rent; that the exaction of rent is the object which they are pursuing, and that they absolutely refuse to propose any remedy for a grievance which they acknowledge. Then the right hon. Member for West Birmingham says—"Oh, I would have given you a remedy last year, but you would not take it." But you do not propose to give that remedy this year. Why does not my right hon. Friend introduce an Arrears Bill on his own responsibility? Last year, there never was any proposal whatever to deal with arrears, except in the form which, whatever you may call it, was practically a bankruptcy proposal. My right hon. Friend, it is quite true, talked about some cheap and easy method of procedure, and I confess that, for a moment last year, during that discussion, I was almost persuaded to join my right hon. Friend. The right hon. Gentleman almost surprised my innocence, for I did not understand what his proposal was, and when he was good enough to refer then, as he has done to-day, to the celebrated Bankruptcy Bill of 1883, I found by reference to the 122nd clause of that Act, that the proposal was a bankruptcy proposal. ["Oh, oh."] Was not a proposal to call all the creditors to receive payment *pro ratâ* of their claims a bankruptcy proposal? It was that and nothing else. There never has been any proposal except a bankruptcy proposal to deal with these arrears. Everybody has rejected that, and no proposal has been made in its place. Last year, when the Government were pressed on this subject, they admitted the grievance. They made a proposal which was not accepted; but they said—"We have not said our last word upon Irish land." The hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson) has implored that there should be no more land legislation. But that is exactly what the Government said there should be, and whenever any point of weakness or defect was pointed out in their Bill, they said—"We admit there are many grievances, many defects, in this Bill, but we undertake to cure them in the next Session of Parliament by the great measure of purchase which we are about to introduce." What has become of the great purchase measure which was promised by the Government, and which was to cover all the defects of the Bill of 1887? Here is the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham—I was going to say going down on his knees, but that is not a form which he generally employs—I should rather say shaking his fist against the Government, and saying—"Let us have no more Irish legislation whatever." That is the condition in which the Unionist Party desires to leave the Land Question in Ireland. It is not a just, it is not a fair, it is not a safe position. The House of Commons, at the invitation of my right hon. Friend, are going to give a most unwise, a most dangerous vote. They are going to tell the Irish people that they have a grievance; but that although the Representatives of the great mass of the Irish Nation have proposed a remedy for that grievance, that though that Bill is supported by the hon. Member for South Tyrone and his Friends, they will pay no attention to it. The noble Viscount the Member for one of the Divisions of Devonshire (Viscount Ebrington) said that, of course, the Irish Members would not agree to what he said. But the noble Viscount has adopted a policy which he knows the Irish Members cannot accept.

VISCOUNT EBRINGTON said, that he had not said anything of the kind.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I apologize to the noble Viscount. But surely, in my opinion, the position taken up by the Government is an unwise and unsafe position upon a question of this kind, to assume, as fundamental, an attitude from which the great mass of Irish Representatives must dissent. You admit a grievance, but refuse the remedy of the hon. Member for the City of Cork and those who support him, with the additional support of the hon. Member for South Tyrone. You are going to thrust upon the Irish people on the point of the sword these arrears of rent, which you cannot deny to be unjust, which nobody denies to be unjust, and in this way you think you will recommend the English Government to the Irish people. It is not reasonable, or just, or likely that any people will be content with a Government which acts towards them in such a way. If the remedy now offered by the Bill of the hon. Member for the City of Cork, which was recommended by the Party at Devonshire House last year, which is recommended in the Bill upon which is inscribed the name of the hon. Member for South Tyrone and the other hon. Gentleman I have referred to, is to be rejected by you, then, in God's name, make your own proposal. But to take up the position of saying that this grievance, which is admitted and which is imminent, is to have no remedy at all, is a course which seems to me to be founded in injustice, and must inevitably end in disaster.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 243; Noes 328: Majority 85.

AYES.

Abraham, W. (Limerick, W.)
Acland, A. H. D.
Acland, C. T. D.
Allison, R. A.
Anderson, C. H.
Asher, A.
Asquith, H. H.
Atherley-Jones, L.
Austin, J.
Balfour, Sir G.
Balfour, rt. hon. J. B.
Ballantine, W. H. W.
Barbour, W. B.
Barran, J.
Barry, J.
Biggar, J. G.
Blane, A.
Bolton, J. C.
Bolton, T. D.
Bright, Jacob
Bright, W. L.
Brown, A. L.
Bruce, hon. R. P.
Brunner, J. T.
Bryce, J.
Buchanan, T. R.
Burt, T.
Buxton, S. C.
Byrne, G. M.
Cameron, J. M.
Campbell, Sir G.
Campbell, H.
Campbell-Bannerman, right hon. H.
Carew, J. L.
Causton, R. K.
Cavan, Earl of
Chance, P. A.
Channing, F. A.
Childers, rt. hon. H. C. E.
Clancy, J. J.
Clark, Dr. G. B.
Cobb, H. P.
Coleridge, hon. B.
Commins, A.
Condon, T. J.
Conway, M.
Corbet, W. J.
Cossham, H.
Cox, J. R.
Cozens-Hardy, H. H.
Craig, J.
Craven, J.
Crawford, D.
Crawford, W.
Cremer, W. R.
Crilly, D.
Crossley, E.
Deasy, J.
Dillwyn, L. L.
Dixon, G.
Dodds, J.
Duff, R. W.
Ellis, J.
Ellis, T. E.
Esslemont, P.
Farquharson, Dr. R.
Fenwick, C.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro-
Finlay, R. B.
Finucane, J.
Firth, J. F. B.
Flynn, J. C.
Foley, P. J.
Forster, Sir C.
Foster, Sir W. B.
Fowler, rt. hn. H. H.
Fox, Dr. J. F.
Fry, T.
Fuller, G. P.
Gardner, H.
Gaskell, C. G. Milnes-
Gilhooly, J.
Gill, T. P.
Gladstone, right hon. W. E.
Gladstone, H. J.
Gourley, E. T.
Grey, Sir E.
Grove, Sir T. F.
Gully, W. C.
Haldane, R. B.
Hanbury-Tracy, hon. F. S. A.
Harcourt, rt. hon. Sir W. G. V. V.
Harrington, E.
Harrington, T. C.
Harris, M.
Hayden, L. P.
Hayne, C. Seale-
Healy, M.
Healy, T. M.
Hingley, B.
Hobhouse, H.
Holden, I.
Howell, G.
Hoyle, I.
Hunter, W. A.
Illingworth, A.
Jacoby, J. A.
Joicey, J.
Jordan, J.
Kennedy, E. J.
Kenny, C. S.
Kenny, J. E.
Kenny, M. J.
Kilbride, D.
Labouchere, H.
Lalor, R.
Lane, W. J.
Lawson, Sir W.
Lawson, H. L. W.
Lea, T.
Leahy, J.
Leake, R.
Lewis, T. P.
Lockwood, F.
Lyell, L.
Macdonald, W. A.
Mac Innes, M.
Mackintosh, C. F.
Mac Neill, J. G. S.
M'Arthur, A.
M'Arthur, W. A.
M'Cartan, M.
M'Carthy, J.
M'Carthy, J. H.
M'Donald, P.
M'Donald, Dr. R.
M'Ewan, W.
M'Kenna, Sir J. N.
M'Lagan, P.
M'Laren, W. S. B.
Mahony, P.
Maitland, W. F.
Mappin, Sir F. T.
Marum, E. M.
Mayne, T.
Menzies, R. S.
Montagu, S.
Morgan, rt. hon. G. O.
Morgan, O. V.
Morley, rt. hon. J.
Mundella, rt. hon. A. J.
Murphy, W. M.
Neville, R.
Newnes, G.
Nolan, Colonel J. P.
Nolan, J.
O'Brien, J. F. X.
O'Brien, P.
O'Brien, P. J.
O'Brien, W.
O'Connor, A.
O'Connor, J.
O'Connor, T. P.
O'Doherty, J. E.
O'Hanlon, T.
O'Hea, P.
O'Kelly, J.
Palmer, Sir C. M.
Parker, C. S.
Parnell, C. S.
Paulton, J. M.
Pease, Sir J. W.
Pease, A. E.
Pickard, B.
Pickersgill, E. H.
Picton, J. A.
Pinkerton, J.
Playfair, right hon. Sir L.
Plowden, Sir W. C.
Portman, hon. E. B.
Potter, T. B.
Power, P. J.
Price, T. P.
Priestley, B.
Provand, A. D.
Pyne, J. D.
Quinn, T.
Rathbone, W.
Redmond, J. E.
Redmond, W. H. K.
Rendel, S.
Reynolds, W. J.
Richard, H.
Roberts, J.
Roberts, J. B.
Robertson, E.
Robinson, T.
Roe, T.
Roscoe, Sir H. E.
Rowlands, J.
Rowntree, J.
Russell, Sir C.
Russell, T. W.
Samuelson, Sir B.
Samuelson, G. B.
Schwann, C. E.
Sheehan, J. D.
Simon, Sir J.
Sinclair, W. P.
Slagg, J.
Smith, S.
Spencer, hon. C. R.
Stack, J.
Stanhope, hon. P. J.

Stansfeld, right hon. J.
Stevenson, F. S.
Stevenson, J. C.
Stuart, J.
Sullivan, D.
Sullivan, T. D.
Summers, W.
Sutherland, A.
Swinburne, Sir J.
Tanner, C. K.
Thomas, A.
Thomas, D. A.
Tuite, J.
Vivian, Sir H. H.
Wallace, R.
Wardle, H.
Warmington, C. M.
Watt, H.
Wayman, T.
Whitbread, S.
Will, J. S.
Williams, A. J.
Williamson, S.
Wilson, C. H.
Wilson, H. J.
Wilson, I.
Woodall, W.
Woodhead, J.
Wright, C.

TELLERS.
Flower, C.
Morley, A.

NOES.

Addison, J. E. W.
Agg-Gardner, J. T.
Ainslie, W. G.
Aird, J.
Allsopp, hon. G.
Allsopp, hon. P.
Ambrose, W.
Amherst, W. A. T.
Anstruther, H. T.
Ashmead-Bartlett, E.
Baden-Powell, Sir G. S.
Bailey, Sir J. R.
Baird, J. G. A.
Balfour, rt. hon. A. J.
Banes, Major G. E.
Baring, Viscount
Baring, T. C.
Barry, A. H. Smith-
Bartley, G. C. T.
Barttelot, Sir W. B.
Bass, H.
Bates, Sir E.
Baumann, A. A.
Beach, right hon. Sir M. E. Hicks-
Beach, W. W. B.
Beadel, W. J.
Beaumont, H. F.
Beckett, W.
Bentinck, rt. hn. G. C.
Bentinck, Lord H. C.
Bentinck, W. G. C.
Beresford, Lord C. W. de la Poer
Bethell, Commander G. R.
Bickford-Smith, W.
Biddulph, M.
Bigwood, J.
Birkbeck, Sir E.
Blundell, Colonel H. B. H.
Bolitho, T. B.
Bond, G. H.
Bonsor, H. C. O.
Boord, T. W.
Borthwick, Sir A.
Bridgeman, Col. hon. F. C.
Bristowe, T. L.
Brodrick, hon. W. St. J. F.
Brookfield, A. M.
Brooks, Sir W. C.
Brown, A. H.
Bruce, Lord H.
Burdett-Coutts, W. L. Ash.-B.
Burghley, Lord
Caine, W. S.
Campbell, Sir A.
Campbell, J. A.
Campbell, R. F. F.
Carmarthen, Marq. of
Cavendish, Lord E.
Chamberlain, rt. hn. J.
Chamberlain, R.
Chaplin, right hon. H.
Charrington, S.
Churchill, rt. hn. Lord R. H. S.
Clarke, Sir E. G.
Cochrane-Baillie, hon. C. W. A. N.
Coddington, W.
Coghill, D. H.
Colomb, Capt. J. C. R.
Commerell, Adml. Sir J. E.
Compton, F.
Cooke, C. W. R.
Corbett, A. C.
Corbett, J.
Corry, Sir J. P.
Cotton, Capt. E. T. D.
Cross, H. S.
Crossley, Sir S. B.
Crossman, Gen. Sir W.
Cubitt, right hon. G.
Currie, Sir D.
Curzon, Viscount
Curzon, hon. G. N.
Dalrymple, Sir C.
Davenport, H. T.
Davenport, W. B.
Dawnay, Colonel hon. L. P.
De Lisle, E. J. L. M. P.
De Worms, Baron H.
Dickson, Major A. G.
Dimsdale, Baron R.
Dixon-Hartland, F. D.
Donkin, R. S.
Dorington, Sir J. E.
Douglas, A. Akers-
Duncan, Colonel F.
Duncombe, A.
Dyke, right hon. Sir W. H.
Edwards-Moss, T. C.
Egerton, hon. A. de T.
Elcho, Lord
Elliot, Sir G.
Elliot, hon. H. F. H.
Elliot, G. W.
Ellis, Sir J. W.
Elton, C. I.
Ewart, Sir W.
Ewing, Sir A. O.
Eyre, Colonel H.
Farquharson, H. R.
Feilden, Lt.-Gen. R. J.
Fellowes, A. E.
Fergusson, right hon. Sir J.
Field, Admiral E.
Fielden, T.
Finch, G. H.
Fisher, W. H.
Fitzgerald, R. U. P.
Fitzwilliam, hon. W. H. W.
Fitzwilliam, hon. W. J. W.
Fitz-Wygram, Gen. Sir F. W.
Fletcher, Sir H.
Forwood, A. B.
Fowler, Sir R. N.
Fraser, General C. C.
Fry, L.
Fulton, J. F.
Gathorne-Hardy, hon. A. E.
Gedge, S.
Gent-Davis, R.
Giles, A.
Gilliat, J. S.
Godson, A. F.
Goldsmid, Sir J.
Goldsworthy, Major General W. T.
Gorst, Sir J. E.
Goschen, rt. hon. G. J.
Gray, C. W.
Green, Sir E.
Greenall, Sir G.
Greene, E.
Grimston, Viscount
Grotrian, F. B.
Gurdon, R. T.
Hall, A. W.
Hall, C.
Halsey, T. F.
Hambro, Col. C. J. T.
Hamilton, right hon. Lord G. F.
Hamilton, Lord C. J.
Hamilton, Lord E.
Hamilton, Col. C. E.
Hamley, Gen. Sir E. B.
Hanbury, R. W.
Hankey, F. A.
Hardcastle, F.
Hastings, G. W.
Havelock-Allan, Sir H. M.
Heath, A. R.
Heathcote, Capt. J. H. Edwards-
Heaton, J. H.
Heneage, right hon. E.
Herbert, hon. S.
Hermon-Hodge, R. T.
Hervey, Lord F.
Hill, right hon. Lord A. W.
Hill, Colonel E. S.
Hill, A. S.
Hoare, E. B.
Hoare, S.
Holloway, G.
Hornby, W. H.
Houldsworth, Sir W. H.
Howard, J.
Howorth, H. H.
Hozier, J. H. C.
Hubbard, hon. E.
Hughes, Colonel E.
Hughes-Hallett, Col. F. C.
Hulse, E. H.
Hunt, F. S.
Hunter, Sir W. G.
Isaacson, F. W.
Jackson, W. L.
James, rt. hon. Sir H.
Jardine, Sir R.
Jarvis, A. W.
Jeffreys, A. F.
Jennings, L. J.
Johnston, W.
Kelly, J. R.
Kennaway, Sir J. H.
Kenrick, W.
Kenyon, hon. G. T.
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W.
Ker, R. W. B.
Kerans, F. H.
Kimber, H.
King, H. S.
King-Harman, right hon. Colonel E. R.
Knatchbull-Hugessen, H. T.
Knightley, Sir R.
Knowles, L.
Lafone, A.
Lambert, C.
Laurie, Colonel R. P.
Lawrence, Sir J. J. T.
Lawrence, W. F.
Lechmere, Sir E. A. H.
Lees, E.
Legh, T. W.
Lennox, Lord W. C. Gordon-
Lewis, Sir C. E.
Lewisham, right hon. Viscount
Llewellyn, E. H.
Long, W. H.
Low, M.
Lowther, hon. W.
Lymington, Viscount
Macartney, W. G. E.
Macdonald, rt. hon. J. H. A.
Maclean, F. W.
Maclean, J. M.
Maclure, J. W.
M'Calmont, Captain J.

Madden, D. H.
Makins, Colonel W. T.
Malcolm, Col. J. W.
Mallock, R.
Marriott, rt. hn. W. T.
Maskelyne, M. H. N. Story-
Matthews, rt. hon. H.
Mattinson, M. W.
Maxwell, Sir H. E.
Mayne, Adml. R. C.
Mildmay, F. B.
Mills, hon. C. W.
More, R. J.
Morrison, W.
Moss, R.
Mount, W. G.
Mowbray, rt. hon. Sir J. R.
Mowbray, R. G. C.
Mulholland, H. L.
Muncaster, Lord
Muntz, P. A.
Murdoch, C. T.
Newark, Viscount
Noble, W.
Norris, E. S.
Northcote, hon. Sir H. S.
Norton, R.
O'Neill, hon. R. T.
Paget, Sir R. H.
Parker, hon. F.
Pearce, Sir W.
Pelly, Sir L.
Penton, Captain F. T.
Plunket, rt. hon. D. R.
Pomfret, W. P.
Powell, F. S.
Puleston, Sir J. H.
Quilter, W. C.
Raikes, right hon. H. C.
Rankin, J.
Rasch, Major F. C.
Reed, H. B.
Richardson, T.
Ridley, Sir M. W.
Ritchie, rt. hn. C. T.
Robertson, Sir W. T.
Robertson, J. P. B.
Robinson, B.
Rollit, Sir A. K.
Rothschild, Baron F. J. de
Round, J.
Russell, Sir G.
Salt, T.
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. T. M.
Saunderson, Col. E. J.
Sellar, A. C.
Selwin-Ibbetson, right hon. Sir H. J.
Selwyn, Captain C. W.
Seton-Karr, H.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H.
Sidebotham, J. W.
Sidebottom, W.
Smith, right hon. W. H.
Smith, A.
Spencer, J. E.
Stanhope, rt. hon. E.
Stephens, H. C.
Stewart, M. J.
Stokes, G. G.
Sutherland, T.
Sykes, C.
Talbot, J. G.
Taylor, F.
Temple, Sir R.
Thorburn, W.
Tollemache, H. J.
Tomlinson, W. E. M.
Tyler, Sir H. W.
Vernon, hon. G. R.
Vincent, C. E. H.
Walrond, Col. W. H.
Walsh, hon. A. H. J.
Waring, Colonel T.
Watson, J.
Webster, Sir R. E.
Webster, R. G.
West, Colonel W. C.
Weymouth, Viscount
Wharton, J. L.
White, J. B.
Whitley, E.
Whitmore, C. A.
Wiggin, H.
Wilson, Sir S.
Winn, hon. R.
Wodehouse, E. R.
Wolmer, Viscount
Wood, N.
Wortley, C. B. Stuart-
Wright, H. S.
Wroughton, P.
Yerburgh, R. A.
Young, C. E. B.

TELLERS.

Ebrington, Viscount
Williams, J. Powell-

Question put, "That those words be there *added*."

The House *divided* :—Ayes 320 ; Noes 230 : Majority 90.

AYES.

Addison, J. E. W.
Agg-Gardner, J. T.
Ainslie, W. G.
Aird, J.
Allsopp, hon. G.
Allsopp, hon. P.
Ambrose, W.
Amherst, W. A. T.
Anstruther, H. T.
Ashmead-Bartlett, E.
Baden-Powell, Sir G. S.
Bailey, Sir J. R.
Baird, J. G. A.
Balfour, rt. hon. A. J.
Banes, Major G. E.
Barclay, J. W.
Baring, Viscount
Baring, T. C.
Barry, A. H. Smith-
Bartley, G. C. T.
Barttelot, Sir W. B.
Bass, H.
Bates, Sir E.
Baumann, A. A.
Beach, right hon. Sir M. E. Hicks-
Beach, W. W. B.
Beadel, W. J.
Beaumont, H. F.
Beckett, W.
Bentinck, rt. hn. G. C.
Bentinck, Lord H. C.
Bentinck, W. G. C.
Beresford, Lord C. W. De la Poer
Bethell, Commander G. R.
Bickford-Smith, W.
Biddulph, M.
Bigwood, J.
Birkbeck, Sir E.
Blundell, Colonel H. B. H.
Bolitho, T. B.
Bond, G. H.
Bonsor, H. C. O.
Boord, T. W.
Borthwick, Sir A.
Bridgeman, Col. hon. F. C.
Bristowe, T. L.
Brodrick, hon. W. St. J. F.
Brookfield, A. M.
Brooks, Sir W. C.
Brown, A. H.
Bruce, Lord H.
Burdett-Coutts, W. L. Ash.-B.
Burghley, Lord
Caine, W. S.
Campbell, Sir A.
Campbell, Sir G.
Campbell, J. A.
Campbell, R. F. F.
Carmarthen, Marq. of
Cavendish, Lord E.
Chamberlain, rt. hn. J.
Chamberlain, R.
Charrington, S.
Clarke, Sir E. G.
Cochrane-Baillie, hon. C. W. A. N.
Coddington, W.
Coghill, D. H.
Colomb, Capt. J. C. R.
Commerell, Adml. Sir J. E.
Compton, F.
Cooke, C. W. R.
Corbett, A. C.
Corbett, J.
Corry, Sir J. P.
Cotton, Capt. E. T. D.
Cross, H. S.
Crossley, Sir S. B.
Crossman, Gen. Sir W.
Cubitt, right hon. G.
Currie, Sir D.
Curzon, hon. G. N.
Dalrymple, Sir C.
Davenport, H. T.
Davenport, W. B.
Dawnay, Colonel hon L. P.
De Lisle, E. J. L. M. P.
De Worms, Baron H.
Dimsdale, Baron R.
Dixon-Hartland, F. D.
Donkin, R. S.
Douglas, A. Akers-
Duncombe, A.
Dyke, right hon. Sir W. H.
Edwards-Moss, T. C.
Egerton, hon. A. de T.
Elcho, Lord
Elliot, Sir G.
Elliot, hon. H. F. H.
Elliot, G. W.
Ellis, Sir J. W.
Elton, C. I.
Ewart, Sir W.
Ewing, Sir A. O.
Eyre, Colonel H.
Farquharson, H. R.
Feilden, Lieut.-Gen. R. J.
Fellowes, A. E.
Fergusson, right hon. Sir J.
Field, Admiral E.
Fielden, T.
Finch, G. H.
Fisher, W. H.
Fitzgerald, R. U. P.
Fitzwilliam, hon. W. H. W.
Fitzwilliam, hon. W. J. W.
Fitz-Wygram, General Sir F. W.
Fletcher, Sir H.
Folkestone, right hon. Viscount
Forwood, A. B.
Fowler, Sir R. N.
Fraser, General C. C.
Fry, L.
Fulton, J. F.
Gardner, R. Richardson-
Gathorne-Hardy, hon. A. E.
Gedge, S.
Gent-Davis, R.
Giles, A.
Gilliat, J. S.
Godson, A. F.
Goldsmid, Sir J.
Goldsworthy, Major-General W. T.
Gorst, Sir J. E.
Goschen, right hon. G. J.
Gray, C. W.
Green, Sir E.
Greenall, Sir G.

Greene, E
Grimston, Viscount
Grotrian, F. B.
Gurdon, R. T.
Hall, C.
Halsey, T. F.
Hambro, Col. C. J. T.
Hamilton, right hon. Lord G. F.
Hamilton, Lord C. J.
Hamilton, Lord E.
Hamilton, Col. C. E.
Hamley, Gen. Sir E. B.
Hanbury, R. W.
Hankey, F. A.
Hardcastle, F.
Hastings, G. W.
Havelock-Allan, Sir H. M.
Heath, A. R.
Heathcote, Capt. J. H. Edwards-
Heaton, J. H.
Heneage, right hon. E.
Herbert, hon. S.
Hervey, Lord F.
Hill, right hon. Lord A. W.
Hill, Colonel E. S.
Hill, A. S.
Hoare, E. B.
Hoare, S.
Holloway, G.
Hornby, W. H.
Houldsworth, Sir W. H.
Howard, J.
Hozier, J. H. C.
Hubbard, hon. E.
Hughes, Colonel E.
Hughes-Hallett, Col. F. C.
Hulse, E. H.
Hunt, F. S.
Hunter, Sir W. G.
Isaacson, F. W.
Jackson, W. L.
James, rt. hon. Sir H.
Jardine, Sir R.
Jarvis, A. W.
Jeffreys, A. F.
Johnston, W.
Kelly, J. R.
Kennaway, Sir J. H.
Kenrick, W.
Kenyon, hon. G. T.
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W.
Ker, R. W. B.
Kerans, F. H.
Kimber, H.
King, H. S.
King-Harman, right hon. Colonel E. R.
Knatchbull-Hugessen, H. T.
Knightley, Sir R.
Knowles, L.
Lafone, A.
Lambert, C.
Laurie, Colonel R. P.
Lawrence, Sir J. J. T.
Lawrence, W. F.
Lechmere, Sir E. A. H.
Lees, E.
Legh, T. W.
Lennox, Lord W. C. Gordon-
Lewis, Sir C. E.
Lewisham, right hon. Viscount
Llewellyn, E. H.
Long, W. H.
Low, M.
Lowther, hon. W.
Lymington, Viscount
Macartney, W. G. E.
Macdonald, right hon. J. H. A.
Mackintosh, C. F.
Maclean, F. W.
Maclean, J. M.
Maclure, J. W.
M'Calmont, Captain J.
Madden, D. H.
Makins, Colonel W. T.
Malcolm, Col. J. W.
Mallock, R.
Marriott, right hon. W. T.
Maskelyne, M. H. N. Story-
Matthews, right hon. H.
Mattinson, M. W.
Maxwell, Sir H. E.
Mayne, Admiral R. C.
Mildmay, F. B.
Mills, hon. C. W.
More, R. J.
Morrison, W.
Moss, R.
Mount, W. G.
Mowbray, rt. hon. Sir J. R.
Mowbray, R. G. C.
Mulholland, H. L.
Muncaster, Lord
Muntz, P. A.
Murdoch, C. T.
Newark, Viscount
Noble, W.
Norris, E. S.
Northcote, hon. Sir H. S.
Norton, R.
Paget, Sir R. H.
Parker, hon. F.
Pearce, Sir W.
Pelly, Sir L.
Penton, Captain F. T.
Plunket, right hon. D. R.
Pomfret, W. P.
Powell, F. S.
Quilter, W. C.
Raikes, rt. hon. H. C.
Rankin, J.
Rasch, Major F. C.
Reed, H. B.
Richardson, T.
Ridley, Sir M. W.
Ritchie, right hon. C. T.
Robertson, Sir W. T.
Robertson, J. P. B.
Robinson, B.
Rollit, Sir A. K.
Rothschild, Baron F. J. de
Round, J.
Russell, Sir G.
Salt, T.
Sandys, Lieut-Col. T. M.
Saunderson, Colonel E. J.
Sellar, A. C.
Selwin-Ibbetson, rt. hon. Sir H. J.
Selwyn, Capt. C. W.
Seton-Karr, H.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H.
Sidebotham, J. W.
Sidebottom, W.
Sinclair, W. P.
Smith, rt. hon. W. H.
Smith, A.
Spencer, J. E.
Stanhope, rt. hon. E.
Stephens, H. C.
Stewart, M. J.
Stokes, G. G.
Sutherland, T.
Sykes, C.
Talbot, J. G.
Taylor, F.
Temple, Sir R.
Thorburn, W.
Tollemache, H. J.
Tomlinson, W. E. M.
Tyler, Sir H. W.
Vernon, hon. G. R.
Vincent, C. E. H.
Walrond, Col. W. H.
Walsh, hon. A. H. J.
Waring, Colonel T.
Watson, J.
Webster, Sir R. E.
Webster, R. G.
West, Colonel W. C.
Weymouth, Viscount
Wharton, J. L.
White, J. B.
Whitley, E.
Whitmore, C. A.
Wiggin, H.
Wilson, Sir S.
Winn, hon. R.
Wolmer, Viscount
Wood, N.
Wortley, C. B. Stuart-
Wright, H. S.
Wroughton, P
Yerburgh, R. A.
Young, C. E. B.

TELLERS.

Ebrington, Viscount
Williams, J. Powell-

NOES.

Abraham, W. (Limerick, W.)
Acland, A. H. D.
Acland, C. T. D.
Allison, R. A.
Anderson, C. H.
Asher, A.
Asquith, H. H.
Austin, J.
Balfour, Sir G.
Balfour, rt. hon. J. B.
Ballantine, W. H. W.
Barbour, W. B.
Barran, J.
Barry, J.
Biggar, J. G.
Blane, A.
Bolton, J. C.
Bolton, T. D.
Bright, W. L.
Brown, A. L.
Bruce, hon. R. P.
Brunner, J. T.
Bryce, J.
Buchanan, T. R.
Burt, T.
Buxton, S. C.
Byrne, G. M.
Cameron, J. M.
Campbell, H.
Campbell-Bannerman, right hon. H.
Carew, J. L.
Causton, R. K.
Cavan, Earl of
Chance, P. A.
Channing, F. A.
Childers, right hon. H. C. E.
Clancy, J. J.
Clark, Dr. G. B.
Cobb, H. P.
Coleridge, hon. B.
Commins, A.
Condon, T. J.
Conway, M.
Corbet, W. J.
Cossham, H.
Cox, J. R.
Cozens-Hardy, H. H.
Craig, J.
Craven, J.
Crawford, D.
Crawford, W.
Cremer, W. R.
Crilly, D.
Crossley, E.
Deasy, J.
Dillwyn, L. L.
Dodds, J.
Duff, R. W.
Ellis, J.
Ellis, T. E.
Esslemont, P.
Farquharson, Dr. R.
Fenwick, C.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro-
Finlay, R. B.
Finucane, J.
Firth, J. F. B.
Flynn, J. C.
Foley, P. J.
Forster, Sir C.
Foster, Sir W. B.
Fowler, rt. hon. H. H.
Fox, Dr. J. F.
Fry, T.
Fuller, G. P.

Gardner, H.
Gaskell, C. G. Milnes-
Gilhooly, J
Gill. T. P.
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.
Gladstone, H. J.
Gourley, E. T.
Grey, Sir E.
Grove, Sir T. F.
Gully, W. C.
Hanbury-Tracy, hon. F. S. A.
Harcourt, rt. hn. Sir W. G. V. V.
Harrington, E.
Harrington, T. C.
Harris, M.
Hayden, L. P.
Hayne, C. Seale-
Healy, M.
Healy, T. M.
Hingley, B.
Holden, I.
Howell, G.
Hoyle, I.
Hunter, W. A.
Illingworth, A.
Jacoby, J. A.
Joicey, J.
Jordan, J.
Kennedy, E. J.
Kenny, C. S.
Kenny, J. E.
Kenny, M. J.
Kilbride, D.
Labouchere, H.
Lalor, R.
Lane, W. J.
Lawson, Sir W.
Lawson, H. L. W.
Leahy, J.
Leake, R.
Lewis, T. P.
Lockwood, F.
Lyell, L.
Macdonald, W. A.
MacInnes, M.
Mac Neill, J. G. S.
M'Arthur, A.
M'Arthur, W. A.
M'Cartan, M.
M'Carthy, J.
M'Carthy, J. H.
M'Donald, P.
M'Donald, Dr. R.
M'Ewan, W.
M'Kenna, Sir J. N.
M'Lagan, P.
M'Laren, W. S. B.
Mahony, P.
Maitland, W. F.
Mappin, Sir F. T.
Marum, E. M.
Mayne, T.
Menzies, R. S.
Montagu, S.
Morgan, right hon. G. O.
Morgan, O. V.
Morley, rt. hon. J.
Mundella, right hon. A. J.
Murphy, W. M.
Neville, R.
Newnes, G.
Nolan, Colonel J. P.
Nolan, J.
O'Brien, J. F. X.
O'Brien, P.
O'Brien, P. J.
O'Brien, W.
O'Connor, A.
O'Connor, J.
O'Connor, T. P.
O'Doherty, J. E.
O'Hanlon, T.
O'Hea, P.
O'Kelly, J.
Palmer, Sir C. M.
Parker, C. S.
Parnell, C. S.
Paulton, J. M.
Pease, Sir J. W.
Pease, A. E.
Pickard, B.
Pickersgill, E. H.
Picton, J. A.
Pinkerton, J.
Playfair, right hon. Sir L.
Plowden, Sir W. C.
Portman, hon. E. B.
Power, P. J.
Price, T. P.
Priestley, B.
Provand, A. D.
Pyne, J. D.
Quinn, T.
Redmond, J. E.
Redmond, W. H. K.
Rendel, S.
Reynolds, W. J.
Roberts, J. B.
Roberts, J.
Robertson, E.
Robinson, T.
Roe, T.
Roscoe, Sir H. E.
Rowlands, J.
Rowntree, J.
Russell, Sir C.
Russell, T. W.
Samuelson, Sir B.
Samuelson, G. B.
Schwann, C. E.
Sheehan, J. D.
Simon, Sir J.
Smith, S.
Spencer, hon. C. R.
Stack, J.
Stanhope, hon. P. J.
Stansfeld, rt. hon. J.
Stevenson, F. S.
Stevenson, J. C.
Stuart, J.
Sullivan, D.
Sullivan, T. D.
Summers, W.
Sutherland, A.
Swinburne, Sir J.
Tanner, C. K.
Thomas, A.
Thomas, D. A.
Tuite, J.
Vivian, Sir H. H.
Wallace, R.
Wardle, H.
Warmington, C. M.
Watt, H.
Wayman, T.
Whitbread, S.
Will, J. S.
Williams, A. J.
Williamson, S.
Wilson, C. H.
Wilson, H. J.
Wilson, I.
Woodall, W.
Woodhead, J.
Wright, C.

TELLERS.
Flower, C.
Morley, A.

Main Question, as amended, put.

Resolved, That no Bill providing for a composition of arrears of rent in Ireland will be satisfactory to this House, and effectual for the relief of the tenants, which does not at the same time deal with their debts to other creditors besides the landlords.

NATIONAL DEBT (CONVERSION) BILL.

(Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Jackson.)

[BILL 164.] CONSIDERATION.

Order for Consideration, as amended, read.

Mr. COZENS-HARDY (Norfolk, N.) said, he had given Notice of a Motion for the re-committal of the Bill, in order to enable a clause to be inserted whereby trustees who found themselves in possession of Consols or Bank Annuities, which would by this Act be turned into New Stock, would be able to change the investment to such funds as were now authorized by the practice of the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice. Probably, in 99 out of every 100 cases, this power already existed by law; but there might be some cases in which funds were left with express stipulations that they should be invested only in Consols. When an Act of Parliament effecting a conversion came into force, it was only reasonable that trustees should be in the same position as they would be but for this peculiar state of circumstances. A clause was passed in Committee yesterday on the Motion of the hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Gedge), but it did not go the full length of this clause. He begged to move the Motion which stood in his name.

Mr. SPEAKER: Instead of moving that the Bill be re-committed "with respect to a new clause," it would be better to move that the Bill be re-committed, and "that it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power to consider a clause to empower trustees to invest the proceeds of funds converted or exchanged under the Bill in certain other securities."

Question, "That the Bill be re-committed,"—(*Mr. Cozens-Hardy,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

"*Ordered,* That it be an Instruction to the Committee, That they have power to consider a Clause to empower trustees to invest the proceeds of funds converted or exchanged under the Bill in certain other securities."

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

On the Motion of Mr. Cozens-Hardy, the following clause was agreed to and added to the Bill:—

"When any stock, converted or exchanged by virtue of this Act into new stock, is held by a trustee, such trustee shall be at liberty to sell the same, and to invest the proceeds arising from such sale in any of the securities for the time being authorized by the High Court of Justice for the investment of cash under its control, notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in the instrument creating the trust."

Bill reported; as amended, *considered.*

On the Motion of Mr. Jackson, Amendments made in Clause 2, page 2, last line, after the first word "such," by inserting the words "sums or;" in Clause 9, page 6, line 11, after "Ireland," by inserting—

"In the case of stock standing in the name of the Accountant General of the Supreme Court of Judicature in Ireland, may, with the approval in each case of the Treasury."

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan) begged to move the Amendment which he introduced yesterday in Committee, but he had not then had an opportunity of putting in print. In the course of their discussion yesterday, certain powers were given to the Lord Chancellor, the Secretary for Scotland, and the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, to give assent where funds were in the hands of the Court, and the proposal he had to submit was that like power be given to the Charity Commissioners. The proposal was made in the interests of many of the small charities throughout the country. The whole amount of Consols held by them, he believed, exceeded £10,000,000 sterling, and it would save a great deal of trouble, much uncertainty and hardship, if power was given to the Charity Commissioners to give consent in respect of these trusts. He had had an opportunity of holding correspondence with many trustees of these small charities, and he found that great difficulty and uncertainty existed as to proceeding under the Bill. He therefore proposed that the Charity Commissioners should have power to act in their behalf. At the same time he reserved to the trustees full power to dissent, and had no doubt that under the regulations ample opportunity of dissenting would be afforded them.

Amendment proposed,

In Clause 9, page 6, at end of Clause, add—"Provided, that the Treasury may make regulations whereby the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales may on behalf of the said trustees or persons consent to the exchange of the stock unless dissent from such exchange is signified within the time and in the manner fixed by the regulations."—(*Mr. F. S. Powell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) said, he thought it would be necessary to introduce a word or two if the clause was to be made workable. By whom was the dissent to be expressed. The clause said, "unless dissent from such exchange is signified within the time and in the manner fixed by the regulations." Someone must have power conferred upon them.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Richard Webster) (Isle of Wight) said, that if the right hon. Gentleman looked at the Bill he would find that dissent was to be given by the persons who administered the Charity. It was simply intended that they should be able to express dissent without expense.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: Where is it?

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: I think it is in Clause 9.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: There is nothing mentioned of it in that clause.

Mr. F. S. POWELL said, that if the right hon. Gentleman would look at line 26 of Clause 9 he would find the words—

"On the request or with the consent of the trustees or persons acting in the administration of the charity to which that stock belongs."

Question put, and *agreed to.*

On the Motion of Mr. Jackson, Amendment, made in Clause 19, at end, by adding—

"And trustees and other persons acting in a fiduciary character are hereby expressly authorized to make such exchange or give such dissent."

Mr. W. BECKETT (Notts, Bassetlaw) said, he proposed to insert after "Stock," Clause 22, line 2, the words, "or to any person or persons holding a power of attorney to receive dividends on Stock." The object of the Amendment was to put those who held the powers of attorney in the same position as the stockholder himself.

Amendment proposed,

In Clause 22, line 2, after "stock" insert "or to any person or persons holding a power of attorney to receive dividends on stock."—(*Mr. W. Beckett.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.) said, he would suggest to his hon. Friend that he should omit the words "or persons." The object of the hon. Member would be attained without the words.

Mr. W. BECKETT said, he was quite willing to make the Amendment.

Question, "That the words 'or persons' stand part of the proposed Amendment," put and *negatived.*

The CHAIRMAN asked what was meant by the Amendment?

Mr. JACKSON said, with the Amendment, Sub-section 5 of the Clause would read—

"Any payment which the Board was authorized by or under this Act to make to a holder of stock or to any person holding a power of attorney to receive dividends on stock.'"

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER said, that in consequence of the clause which was accepted in the Motion of the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Mr. Cozens-Hardy) with regard to the change of investment, the clause which was adopted by the Committee yesterday must be struck out. He begged to move its omission.

Amendment proposed, to omit the clause, "Transfer of Investment."—(*Sir Richard Webster.*)

Question, "That the Clause proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill," put and *negatived.*

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked whether bankers who held Consols of their own would be allowed to have the commission of 1*s.* 6*d.* per cent if they converted those Consols.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square) said, it was only recognized agents who were to receive commission.

Mr. LABOUCHERE asked, whether if a banker made an arrangement to halve the commission with a broker he could be proceeded against for malpractice.

Mr. GOSCHEN said, he should certainly say not. The Bank of England would be authorized to pay 1*s.* 6*d.* for brokerage, but he did not think the Bank of England or the House of Commons would follow the brokerage when it had once reached the pockets of the broker.

Mr. C. W. GRAY (Essex, Maldon) said, he desired to ask a question with reference to a new clause which was added to the Bill yesterday, and which referred to property which was held in the Court of Chancery. He was afraid that a good deal of inconvenience if not hardship would be occasioned to those who derived dividends from this class of property. The law had said that certain money should be invested in the Court of Chancery, and they knew that when the Court of Chancery once got a grasp of property it was very reluctant to let it go again. Annuitants under these circumstances, he was afraid, would hardly find that the word "may," which was added to the clause yesterday, meaning that the redemption of the property by a trustee "may" be authorized by the Court, would have much effect. He wanted to ask whether there was anything more in the Amendment which was added yesterday than merely giving a discretion to the Judge, which, he thought, would be leaving things very much as they were. Then, he further wished to ask whether anything could be done to lessen the costs of the annuitants who applied to the Court of Chancery to know whether this redemption and transfer of the investment would be allowed. They knew that no question could be put to the Court of Chancery at present on these matters without great expense.

Mr. GOSCHEN said, he was unable to answer the latter part of the hon. Member's question, though he knew that every effort would be made to cut down expenses. With regard to the former part of the question, if the Lord Chancellor agreed to a certain discretion being left in his hands—and presumably he did, seeing that he was a Member of the Government who brought forward the Bill—no doubt he would exercise that discretion in the sense in which he was permitted to exercise it in the Act of Parliament. He (Mr. Goschen) did not think it would be right to direct the Lord Chancellor absolutely by the word "shall."

Bill to be read the third time *To-morrow.*

It being twenty-five minutes after Six of the clock, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

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TO

HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

VOLUME CCCXXIII.

Explanation of the Abbreviations.

Bills, Read 1°, 2° 3°, or 1ª, 2ª, 3ª, Read the First, Second, or Third Time.—In Speeches, 1R., 2R., 3R., Speech delivered on the First, Second, or Third Reading.—*Amendt.*, Amendment.—*Res.*, Resolution.—*Comm.*, Committee.—*Re-Comm.*, Re-Committal.—*Rep.*, Report.—*Consid.*, Consideration.—*Adj.*, Adjournment or Adjourned.—*cl.*, Clause.—*add. cl.*, Additional Clause.—*neg.*, Negatived.—*M. Q.*, Main Question.—*O. Q.*, Original Question.—*O. M.*, Original Motion.—*P. Q.*, Previous Question.—R. P., Report Progress.—*A.*, Ayes.—*N.*, Noes.—*M.*, Majority.—1*st. Div.*, 2*nd. Div.*, First or Second Division.—*l.*, Lords.—*c.*, Commons.

When in this Index a * is added to the Reading of a Bill, it indicates that no Debate took place upon that stage of the measure.

When in the Text or in the Index a Speech is marked thus *, it indicates that the Speech is reprinted from a Pamphlet or some authorized Report.

When in the Index a † is prefixed to a Name or an Office (the Member having accepted or vacated office during the Session) and to Subjects of Debate thereunder, it indicates that the Speeches on those Subjects were delivered in the speaker's private or official character, as the case may be.

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l. Presented; read 1ª * *Mar* 12 (No. 36)

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(*Mr. Wootton Isaacson, Mr. Gourley, Mr. Ambrose, Colonel Hughes*)
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c. Ordered; read 1° * *Mar* 6 [Bill 159]

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Technical Education—Report of Commission on Elementary Education, Question, Mr. F. S. Powell; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 16, 1434

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The Eastern Soudan, Questions, Mr. Howorth, Mr. Dillon; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Mar* 2, 32

Egypt—The Judge Advocate General
Questions, Mr. Dillon; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Mar* 16, 1436
Amendt. on Committee of Supply *Mar* 16, to leave out from "That" add "this House disapproves the acceptance by a Minister of the Crown, holding the Office of Judge Advocate General, of the duties of professional advocate to the ex-Khedive Ismail in the prosecution of a hostile claim against the Egyptian Government, as contrary to Constitutional usage and precedent, as liable to serious misconstruction Abroad and at Home, and as calculated to introduce undesirable complications into our relations with Foreign and friendly countries" (*Mr. Osborne Morgan*) *v.*, 1492; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after debate, Question put; A. 126, N. 218; M. 92 (D.L. 43)

Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment Bill (*The Lord Thurlow*)
l. Read 2ª, after debate *Mar* 5, 139 (No. 1)

Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment (No. 2) Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Wigan, Earl of Crawford*)
l. Presented; read 1ª * *Mar* 12 (No. 38)

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Emigration and Immigration (*Foreigners*)
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Moved, "That the Select Committee on Emigration and Immigration (Foreigners) do consist of Seventeen Members" (*Captain Colomb*) *Mar* 20, 1795
Amendt. to leave out "Seventeen," insert "Nineteen" (*Mr. Fenwick*); Question proposed, "That 'Seventeen,' &c.;" Question put, and negatived; Question, "That 'Nineteen' be there inserted, put," and agreed to; Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to; List of the Committee, 1797

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Observations, Captain Colomb *Mar* 5, 229
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  Moved, "That Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland be a Member of the said Committee" *Mar* 19, 1702; after short debate, Question put, and agreed to
  Moved, "That Mr. William Johnston be a Member of the said Committee;" after short debate, Question put, and agreed to; other Members nominated
  Moved, "That Mr. T. W. Russell be a Member of the said Committee;" after short debate, Question put, and agreed to; other Members nominated

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Newport Pagnell Board of Guardians, Question, Mr. Channing; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Mar* 15, 1274
Town Council of Tenterden, Question, Mr. Cobb; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Mar* 8, 572

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Land Charges Registration and Searches Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Hobhouse*)
l. Presented; read 1ª* *Mar* 12 (No. 40)

Land Law (Ireland) Acts Amendment Bill
(*Mr. Parnell, Mr. Justin M'Carthy, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Dillon, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. T. M. Healy*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *Mar* 21, 1873
Amendt. to leave out from "That," add "no Bill providing for a composition of arrears of rent in Ireland will be satisfactory to this House, and effectual for the relief of the tenants, which does not at the same time deal with their debts to other creditors besides the landlords" (*Mr. Powell-Williams*) *v.*; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after debate, Question put; A. 243, N. 328; M. 85
Division List, Ayes and Noes, 1947
Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to

Land Perpetuity (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. Macartney, Mr. T. W. Russell, Colonel Waring*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Mar* 16 [Bill 176]

Land Transfer Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Chancellor*)
l. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª" *Mar* 20, 1752
Amendt. to leave out ("now") add ("this day six months") (*The Lord Arundell of Wardour*); after debate, Amendt. withdrawn
After further short debate, original Motion agreed to; Bill read 2ª (No. 21)

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES) (*Questions*)
Badsworth Poaching Affray, Question, Mr. Summers; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 12, 864
County Court Acts—Suffolk, Question, Mr. F. S. Stevenson; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 12, 848
Devon Quarter Sessions—Case of Henry Hart, Question, Sir John Kennaway; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 15, 1304
Heavy Sentence at Mumford Petty Sessions—S. M. Cock, Question, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 15, 1278
Hereford Quarter Sessions—Severe Sentences on Boys, Question, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 5, 168
High Court of Justice (*Chancery Division*), Question, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) *Mar* 12, 878
Probates and Letters of Administration—District Probate Registries, Question, Mr. Tomlinson; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) *Mar* 20, 1780
Sentences of Flogging, Question, Sir Henry James; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 2, 26

THE MAGISTRACY (ENGLAND AND WALES)
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The Metropolitan Magistracy—Alterations of Magisterial Districts, Question, Mr. H. Gardner; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 13, 1082

CRIMINAL LAW
Flogging, Question, Mr. R. T. Reid; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 8, 582

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The Salvation Army in Torquay, Question, Mr. Mallock; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 12, 859

Law of Distress Amendment Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Herschell*)
l. Report *Mar* 15, 1254 (No. 23)

Lawson, Sir W., *Cumberland, Cockermouth*
Sunday Closing Acts (Ireland), Nomination of Select Committee, 1704, 1707, 1708

Lawson, Mr. H. L. W., *St. Pancras, W.*
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(*The Lord Herschell*)
l. Read 2ª, after short debate *Mar* 8, 534 (No. 24)
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Limited Liability Companies—Legislation
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Local Government Boundaries Act, 1887—*The Boundaries Commission*
The Report, Questions, Mr. Channing, Mr. F. S. Stevenson; Answers, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Mar* 15, 1303
Warwickshire, Question, Mr. Dugdale; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Mar* 13, 1088

Local Government (England and Wales) Bill
Observations, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie); Questions, Viscount Ebrington, Mr. W. E. Gladstone, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Cobb; Answers, Mr. Ritchie *Mar* 12, 881
The Metropolis, Question, Mr. Baumann; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Mar* 9, 703

Local Government (England and Wales) Bill
(*Mr. Ritchie, Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Long*)
c. Motion for Leave (*Mr. Ritchie*) *Mar* 19, 1640; after long debate, Question put, and agreed to; Bill ordered; read 1° * [Bill 182]

Local Government (England and Wales) Electors Bill
(*Mr. Ritchie, Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Long*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Mar* 19 [Bill 181]

Local Government (England and Wales)—Poor Law Guardians
Question, Mr. Broadhurst; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Mar* 20, 1794

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (Bangor and Warrenpoint) Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Balfour of Burley*)
l. Read 2ª *Mar* 15

Local Taxation—Pauper Lunatic Asylums—The Government Grant
Question, Mr. Allison; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Mar* 13, 1068

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London Labour Market, The—Immigration of Destitute Aliens
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LONG, Mr. W. H. (Secretary to the Local Government Board), *Wilts, Devizes*
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LOWTHER, Mr. J. W., *Cumberland, Penrith*
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l. Read 2ª, after short debate *Mar* 2, 7 (No. 22)
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Supreme Court of Judicature—Council of Law Reporting, 698

Magheramorne, Lord (Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works)
Metropolis—Street Improvements—Hyde Park Corner, 834

Malcolm, Colonel J. W., *Argyllshire*
Education (Scotland)—Education Rates in the Highlands and Islands, 1062
Trawling (Scotland), 2R. 683

Mallock, Mr. R., *Devon, Torquay*
Law and Police—Salvation Army in Torquay, 859

Malta
The New Constitution, Question, Mr. Baumann; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Baron Henry de Worms) *Mar* 6, 379;—*The Papers*, Question, Mr. Baumann; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Baron Henry de Worms) *Mar* 16, 1433

Margarine Act, 1887—*Reduction of Fines (Ireland)*
Questions, Mr. Murphy; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman); Question, Mr. T. M. Healy [no reply] *Mar* 12, 870; Questions, Mr. Murphy, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *Mar* 13, 1083

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Railway and Canal Traffic, Comm. *cl.* 25, 1046

Marriages (Roman Catholic) at Victoria Docks—The Registrar
Question, Mr. T. P. O'Connor; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Mar* 15, 1292

Marriott, Right Hon. W. T. (Judge Advocate General), *Brighton*
Egypt—Judge Advocate General, Res. 1506, 1516, 1535

Marum, Mr. E. M., *Kilkenny, N.*
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Matthews, Right Hon. H. (Secretary of State for the Home Department), *Birmingham, E.*
Burials—Alleged Burial Alive at Leeds Cemetery, 33
Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1872—Employment of Women and Girls (Numbers), 563
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  Metropolitan Magistracy—Alterations of Magisterial Districts, 1082
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  Assaults by Police Constables—Returns, 377, 1286; — William Rogers—Assault by a Police Constable, 376
  John Coleman—Charge of Assault, 187, 378, 585
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Parliament—Business of the House, 1794
Public Meetings in the Metropolis, Res. 36, 37, 129
Reformatory Schools—The Thirtieth Report, 176
Scotland—Reformatory and Industrial Schools Bill, 361
Supreme Court of Judicature Act, 1875—Visitors of Chancery Lunatics, 1780
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Trafalgar Square, Disturbances in — The Military, 1432, 1433;—The Police (Injuries), 1433
Vaccination—The Rev. T. Maine, Ashton-under-Lyne, 861
Wales—Tithe Agitation—Anglesey—Distraints at Heneglwys, 1627, 1791;—Emergency Men, 579

Maxwell, Sir H. E. (A Lord of the Treasury), *Wigton*
Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts—Case of Cow Disease in Wiltshire, 860

Mayne, Admiral R. C., *Pembroke and Haverfordwest*
Administrative System of the Admiralty, Res. 946, 949, 952, 953, 960

Merchandize Marks Act
Question, Observations, Lord Herschell; short debate thereon *Mar* 15, 1256

Merchant Shipping
Collisions at Sea—"Britannic" and "Celtic," Question, Mr. Channing; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Mar* 8, 566
Saving Life at Sea—Legislation, Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) *Mar* 8, 582

Merchant Shipping (Life Saving Appliances) Bill [H.L.] (*The Earl of Onslow*)
l. Presented; read 1ª * *Mar* 15 (No. 43)

Metropolis
River Thames — Deaths from Starvation, Drowning, &c., Question, Mr. Kilbride; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) *Mar* 12, 854

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Metropolis—*cont.*
Safety of the Streets, Question, Mr. Coghill; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 5, 173
Street Improvements—Hyde Park Corner, Question, Observations, Earl Fortescue, Lord Lamington, The Earl of Powis, Lord Magheramorne (Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works); Reply, Lord Henniker *Mar* 12, 832
[See title *Public Meetings*]

Metropolis Local Government Bill
(*Mr. Isaacs, Mr. Kimber, Major-General Goldsworthy, Mr. Baumann, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Hunt, Sir Guyer Hunter, Colonel Duncan*)
c. 2R. Further Proceedings adjourned *Mar* 14, 1236 [Bill 14]
Question, Mr. Isaacs; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 15, 1310

Metropolitan Board of Works—Chairman (*see* Magheramorne, Lord)

Metropolitan Board of Works
Question, Mr. Firth; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 20, 1793
The Royal Commission, Question, Mr. Osborne Morgan; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 6, 368

Metropolitan Police
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Pension to Police Constable 285L, Questions, Mr. Gent-Davis; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 9, 699
Police Constable 98A—*Pay*, Question, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 12, 859
Primitive Methodist Gospel Mission, Question, Mr. R. Chamberlain; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 8, 577
Superannuation, Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 12, 871

Assaults
Alleged Assault by the Police, Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 15, 1286
John Coleman—Charge of Assault, Questions, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 5, 186; *Mar* 6, 377; *Mar* 8, 585

Metropolitan Police—Assaults—cont.
William Rogers—Assault by a Police Constable, Questions, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 6, 376
Returns, Question, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 6, 376

Metropolitan Police—Memorandum of Sir Charles Warren (*Mr. Baggallay*)
Moved, "That this House regrets that the Chief Commissioner of Metropolitan Police should, in an official Memorandum read to his subordinates, have reflected on the administration of the Law by Mr. Ernest Baggallay, one of the Stipendiary Magistrates of the Metropolis, and is of opinion that such a course must tend to produce a most prejudicial effect by weakening the authority of the Magistrate over the Police within his jurisdiction" (*Mr. Pickersgill*) *Mar* 20, 1848; Question proposed, "That the Question be not now put" (*Mr. Secretary Matthews*); after debate, Motion for Previous Question and Original Motion withdrawn

Midleton, Viscount
Navy—Iron-Clads on the Indian Station, 9

Milltown, Earl of
Lunacy Acts Amendment, 2R. 8
Pharmacy Acts Amendment, Comm. *add. cl.* 328, 330

Mining Leases (Cornwall and Devon) Bill
(*Mr. Charles Acland, Mr. Bickford-Smith, Mr. Bolitho, Mr. Courtney, Mr. M'Arthur, Mr. Seale-Hayne*)
c. Read 2° * *Mar* 7 [Bill 114]

Monk Bretton, Lord
Railway and Canal Traffic, Comm. *cl.* 24, 1035

Montagu, Mr. S., *Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel*
National Debt (Conversion), Comm. *cl.* 1, 1803

More, Mr. R. J., *Shropshire, Ludlow*
Local Government (England and Wales), Motion for Leave, 1692

Morgan, Right Hon. G. Osborne, *Denbighshire, E.*
Egypt—Judge Advocate General, Res. 1492
Metropolitan Board of Works—The Royal Commission, 368
Parliament—Sittings of the House—Friday, March 16, 880
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure), Res. XIII. Standing Committees, 471, 482

Morgan, Mr. O. V., *Battersea*
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Morley, Earl of
House of Lords, Motion for a Select Committee, 1604

Morley, Right Hon. J., *Newcastle-upon-Tyne*
House of Lords, Res. 800, 802
Ireland—Criminal Law and Procedure Act, 1887—Prosecutions against Newsvendors, 179
Magistracy—Mr. John Byrne, 1071
Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland [Salary, &c.], Comm. 741, 1639, 1736, 1737
Ways and Means, Comm. 1447

Morocco—Foreign Protection
Question, Sir John Simon; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Mar* 8, 590

Mortmain and Charitable Uses Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Chancellor*)
l. Committee * *Mar* 6 (No. 16)
Report * *Mar* 8 (No. 33)
Read 3ª * *Mar* 13
c. Read 1° * *Mar* 15 [Bill 174]

Mowbray, Right Hon. Sir J. R., *Oxford University*
Committee of Selection (Special Report), 1092
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure), Res. XIII. Standing Committees, 384

Mowbray, Mr. R. G. C., *Lancashire, Prestwich*
Post Office—Halfpenny Postage Company, 23

Mulholland, Mr. H. L., *Londonderry, N.*
Ireland—Labourers' Acts, 1885-6 — Ulster Board of Guardians, 1424

Mundella, Right Hon. A. J., *Sheffield, Brightside*
"Board of Trade Journal"—Mr. Giffen, 579
Civil Servants—Political Demonstrations, 1621
National Debt Acts, Res. 532
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure), Motions for Bills and Nomination of Select Committees, 519
Railway and Canal Traffic, 1639
Scotland—Industrial and Reformatory Schools, 361

Murdoch, Mr. C. T., *Reading*
National Debt Acts, Comm. 737
Public Meetings in the Metropolis, Res. 71, 74

Murphy, Mr. W. M., *Dublin, St. Patrick's*
Army Estimates—Land Forces, 680
Ireland—Prisons—Mrs. Ryan, a Prisoner in Limerick Gaol, 167
Margarine Act, 1887—Fines in Dublin, 870, 1083

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Murphy, Mr. W. M.—*cont.*
Protection of the Empire, 678
War Office (Contracts)—Works to be Executed in Ireland, 180, 181
War Department Works (Ireland), 874, 1083

National Debt (Conversion) Bill
(*Mr. Courtney, Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Jackson*)
c. Resolutions in Committee *Mar* 9, 706
Resolutions reported, and, after short debate, agreed to *Mar* 12, 832; Bill ordered; read 1° * Bill 164]
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *Mar* 16, 1453
Amendt. to leave out from "That," add "having regard to great loss and injury sustained by the very large number of persons who hold small amounts of stock, the interest on which is proposed to be reduced, and to the small annual reduction in the public burdens effected by the proposed conversion, this House thinks it inexpedient to make the change proposed" (*Sir Charles Lewis*) *v.*; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after debate, Amendt. withdrawn; Main Question put; Bill read 2°
Committee; Report *Mar* 20, 1798
Order for Consideration, as amended, read *Mar* 21, 1956; Moved, "That the Bill be re-committed" (*Mr. Cozens-Hardy*); Question put, and agreed to
Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee, That they have power to consider a clause to empower trustees to invest the proceeds of funds converted or exchanged under the Bill in certain other securities
Committee; Report; as amended, considered

National Debt (Conversion) Bill
Conversion of the Three Per Cents, Question, Mr. Henry H. Fowler; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Mar* 9, 704
Conversion by Trustees, Question, Sir Julian Goldsmid; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Mar* 12, 868
Explanations, Questions, Sir Charles Lewis, Mr. Seale-Hayne, Mr. Maclure; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Mar* 15, 1289
Holdings (Numbers), Questions, Sir Charles Lewis, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Mar* 15, 1275
Pensions to National School Teachers, Question, Mr. D. Sullivan; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Mar* 20, 1787
The Bonus, Question, Sir John Lubbock; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Mar* 13, 1079
Trustees' Accounts, Question, Mr. S. Hoare; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Mar* 16, 1429
Trustees, Question, Mr. F. S. Powell; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Mar* 19, 1633

Navy (*Questions*)
Statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty Explanatory of the Navy Estimates, 1888-9 *Mar* 12, 885
Administration of the Navy—Captain Hall, Director of Naval Intelligence, Question, Lord Charles Beresford; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Mar* 20, 1790
Coastguard Station at Carne, Co. Wexford, Question, Mr. Harris; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Mar* 8, 566
Iron-Clads on the Indian Station, Question, Observations, Viscount Midleton; Reply, Lord Elphinstone; short debate thereon *Mar* 2, 9
Merchant Steamers as Armed Cruisers, Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Mar* 12, 871
Position and Pay of Lieutenants, Question, Observations, Lord Sudeley, The Earl of Belmore; Reply, Lord Elphinstone *Mar* 6, 330
Position of Engineer Officers, Question, Sir William Crossman; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Mar* 8, 576
Ships—H.M.S. "Hero," Question, Mr. Leatham Bright; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Mar* 19, 1625
The "Britannia" Training Ship, Question, Mr. Gourley; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Mar* 5, 177
Widows of Retired Navigating Officers, Question, Captain Price; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Mar* 15, 1293

Navy—Administrative System of the Admiralty
Amendt. on Committee of Supply *Mar* 12, To leave out from "That," add "the allocation of authority in the administrative system of the Admiralty requires entire reform" (*Lord Charles Beresford*) *v.*, 931; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after debate, Question put, and agreed to
Main Question again proposed, 977; after debate, Debate adjourned
Debate resumed *Mar* 15, 1312; after long debate, Question put, and agreed to

New South Wales—Celebration of the Centennial
Question, Mr. Johnston; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Baron Henry de Worms) *Mar* 12, 851

New Zealand, Emigration of Pensioners to
Question, Lord Sandhurst; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for War (Lord Harris) *Mar* 20, 1775

Nolan, Colonel J. P., *Galway, N.*
Africa (West Coast)—King Ja-Ja, 373
Fishery Acts Amendment (Ireland), Comm. Motion for an Adjournment, 1181
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Nolan, Colonel J. P.—*cont.*
Local Government (England and Wales), Motion for Leave, 1680
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure), Res. XIII. Standing Committees, 387
Protection of the Empire, 656

Norris, Mr. E. S., *Tower Hamlets, Limehouse*
"Board of Trade Journal"—Mr. Giffen, 579
Oaths, 2R. 1231, 1232

Northbourne, Lord
Railway and Canal Traffic, Comm. *cl.* 25, 1052

Northcote, Hon. Sir H. Stafford, *Exeter*
Protection of the Empire, 294

Norton, Lord
Technical Schools (Scotland) Act, 1887, 2

Norway—Tender for Coal Supply
Question, Mr. Fenwick; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Mar* 8, 586

Oaths Bill
(*Mr. Bradlaugh, Sir John Simon, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Courtney Kenny, Mr. Burt, Mr. Coleridge Mr. Illingworth, Mr. Richard, Colonel Eyre, Mr. Jesse Collings*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *Mar* 14, 1182
Amendt. to leave out from "That" add "having regard to the fact that the Bill for the Amendment of the Law as to Oaths relates not only to the Parliamentary Oath, but involves grave questions of Constitutional usage affecting every class of persons within these Realms, this House declines to make any alteration in the present Law until the whole subject has been investigated by a Royal Commission" (*Mr. Stanley Leighton*) *v.*; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after debate, Question put; A. 247, N. 137; M. 110 (D. L. 38)
Main Question again proposed, "That the Bill be now read 2°;" Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Tomlinson*); Moved, "That the Question be now put" (*Mr. Bradlaugh*); Question put; A. 334, N. 50; M. 284 (D. L. 39); Main Question put; A. 250, N. 150; M. 100
Division List, Ayes and Noes, 1233
Bill read 2° [Bill 7]

O'Brien, Mr. P., *Monaghan, N.*
Ireland—Irish Land Commission—Appeals from Landlords, 1074
Appeals from Sub-Commission—Co. Clare, 180;—Co. Monaghan, 363
Ireland—Post Office—Sub-Post Office at Knockatallon, 1065

O'BRIEN, Mr. P. J., *Tipperary, N.*
Ireland—Franchise Act, 1884—Remuneration to Clerks of Unions, 874
Local Government Board—Payments to Road Contractors, Tipperary, N.R. 1791, 1872

O'CONNOR, Mr. A., *Donegal, E.*
Africa (West Coast)—King Ja-Ja, 373, 374, 375
Army—War Office—Chaplain General to the Forces—Vicarage of St. Peter ad Vincula (Tower of London), 1081
Civil Service—Questions
Copyists, 1301
Political Associations, 383
Political Demonstrations—Mr. Geoffrey Browning and Mr. Fottrell, 1308
Sir Alfred Slade, 185, 186
East India (Purchase and Construction of Raiways), 2R. 323
High Court of Justice (Chancery Division), 878
Inland Revenue—Civil Servants and Political Associations, 1090, 1091
Ireland—Irish Land Commission—Appointment of Registrars of Sub-Commissions, 1089
Sea and Coast Fisheries—Trawling in Lough Swilly, 1618, 1619
National Debt (Conversion), 2R. 1490
Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland [Salary, &c.], Comm. 1735, 1736
Post Office—Officials at Political Meetings, 1430
Protection of the Empire, 619, 624, 627, 643
Royal Commission on Civil Establishments—First Report, 571
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1491, 1537, 1538, 1539, 1541, 1546, 1547
Civil Services (Excesses), 1401
Ways and Means, Comm. 1449, 1452

O'CONNOR, Mr. J., *Tipperary, S.*
Ireland—Loan Fund Board at Cashel, 857
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure), Res. XXII. Select Committees, 531
Sunday Closing Acts (Ireland), Nomination of Select Committee, 1703, 1704, 1706, 1707, 1709
Supply—Civil Service and Revenue Departments, 1361

O'CONNOR, Mr. T. P., *Liverpool, Scotland*
Local Government (England and Wales), 882; Motion for Leave, 1685, 1689
Marriages (Roman Catholic) at Victoria Docks—The Registrar, 1292
National Debt (Conversion), Comm. *add. cl.* 1844
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1547

Occupiers' Disqualification Removal Bill
(*Mr. Whitmore, Mr. Jeffreys, Mr. Hozier, Mr. Mowbray*)
c. 2R., after short debate, Debate adjourned *Mar* 8, 684 [Bill 110]

O'KELLY, Mr. J., *Roscommon, N.*
Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland [Salary, &c.], Comm. 1720, 1721, 1722, 1723, 1724, 1725

ONSLOW, Earl of (Secretary to the Board of Trade)
Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment, 143

Pacific, Islands of the
Raiatea, Question, Mr. Johnston; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Mar* 12, 849
Religious Persecution in Tonga, Question, Mr. W. H. James; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Baron Henry de Worms) *Mar* 8, 560

PAGET, Sir R. H., *Somerset, Wells*
Charity Commissioners—Endowed Schools—Distribution and Numbers, 1294
Local Government (England and Wales), Motion for Leave, 1684, 1688
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure), Res. XIII. Standing Committees 397, 398

PALMER, Sir C. M., *Durham, Jarrow*
Administrative System of the Admiralty, Res. 1337

Paris Exhibition (1889)—*Representation of British Industries*
Question, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 5, 183

PARKER, Mr. C. S., *Perth*
National Debt (Conversion), Comm. *add. cl.* 1841

Parliament
LORDS—
Private Bills
Ordered, That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after Friday the 22nd day of June next [and other Orders] *Mar* 6, 328
Ordered, That the said Orders be printed and published, and affixed on the doors of this House and Westminster Hall. (No. 32)

The Easter Recess, Question, The Earl of Kimberley; Answer, The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (The Marquess of Salisbury) *Mar* 16, 1422

The Constitution of the House, Withdrawal of Motion, The Earl of Dunraven *Mar* 2, 1; Observations, Lord Fitzgerald; Reply, The Earl of Dunraven *Mar* 6, 325

Parliament — Business of the House — Standing Orders
Moved, as a new Standing Order, "That Private Bill Committees shall consist of

[*cont.*

Paliament—Business of the House—Standing Orders—cont.

three Members, and that all applications to Lords to serve upon them shall be addressed in writing to their residences" (*The Lord Stratheden and Campbell*) *Mar* 12, 835; after short debate, Motion withdrawn

Moved, as a new Standing Order, "That in the event of two or more Peers rising to address the House at the same time, the Lord Chancellor or Chairman of Committees may call on one of them to speak, and the Peer called upon shall then proceed to do so" (*The Lord Stratheden and Campbell*) *Mar* 5, 159; after short debate, Motion drawn

Parliament—Business of the House—Rules of Debate

Moved, as a new Standing Order, "That where the House permits reply upon a Motion or a Bill to the Peer who brought it forward, the debate shall not be continued after the reply is over" (*The Lord Stratheden and Campbell*) *Mar* 15, 1262; Motion withdrawn

Parliament—Debates and Proceedings in Parliament

Message from the House of Commons that they have appointed a Committee, to consist of Six Members, to join with a Committee of their Lordships to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament; and to request that their Lordships will be pleased to appoint an equal number of Lords to be joined with the Members of that House: Ordered, that the said Message be taken into consideration to-morrow *Mar* 8

Message of the House of Commons of Yesterday on the subject of the publication of Debates and Proceedings in Parliament, considered (according to Order)

Then it was moved, "That a Committee be appointed, to consist of Six Lords, to join with the Committee of the House of Commons as mentioned in the said Message, to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament" (*The Marquess of Salisbury*); the same was agreed to

A message sent to the Commons in answer to their Message of Yesterday to inform them that this House has appointed a Committee to consist of Six Lords to join with the Committee of the Commons *Mar* 9

Joint Committee with the Committee of the House of Commons appointed to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament *Mar* 13; List of the Committee, 1054

Ordered that such Committee have power to agree with the Committee of the Commons in the appointment of a Chairman *Mar* 13

Message from the Commons to acquaint this House that they have directed the Select Committee appointed by them to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament to meet the Committee appointed by their Lordships in Room No. 1, Upper Corridor, on Thursday next at Twelve of the clock

Ordered, That the Committee appointed by this House do meet the Committee appointed by the Commons in Room No. 1, Upper Corridor, on Thursday next at Twelve of the clock *Mar* 16

The Lord Basing named of the Committee in the place of the Lord Colville of Culross

Parliament—House of Lords

Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the constitution of this House" (*The Earl of Rosebery*) *Mar* 19, 1548

Amendt. to leave out all after ("That,") insert following Resolution—namely, ("it is not a safe thing to place the constitution of this House in the power of a Committee, nor consistent with its dignity to discuss before a Committee the reason for its existence; and if any changes in the constitution of this House are wanted they should be debated and made by the House itself on the motion of the responsible Ministers of the Crown") (*The Earl of Wemyss*); on Question, That the words, &c.; Cont. 50, Not-Cont. 97; M. 47; resolved in the negative

Then the said Resolution was here inserted, and, a Question being stated thereupon, the Previous Question was put, Whether this Question shall be now put? resolved in the negative

Parliament—Private Bill Legislation

Message from the Commons *Mar* 13, 1054

Message of the House of Commons of Tuesday last on the subject of Private Bill Legislation, considered

Moved, "That a Committee be appointed, to consist of Six Lords, to join with a Committee of the House of Commons as mentioned in the said Message, to examine into the present system of Private Bill legislation, and to report how far and in what manner, without prejudice to public interests, that system may be modified with a view to the interests of suitors, the economy of the time of Parliament, and the reduction of costs and charges" (*The Marquess of Salisbury*) *Mar* 15, 1264

Motion agreed to; a message sent to the Commons in answer to their message of Tuesday last to inform them that this House has appointed a Committee to consist of Six Lords to join with the Committee of the House of Commons

COMMONS—

Committee of Selection (*Special Report*) (Chairman's Panel) *Mar* 13, 1092

Committee of Public Accounts

Ordered, That the Committee of Public Accounts do consist of Twelve Members

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records (*Mr. Jackson*) *Mar* 12

[cont.

Parliament—Commons—*cont.*

Privilege

Canvassing Members, Observations, Question, Mr. Henry H. Fowler; Reply, Mr. Speaker *Mar* 16, 1438

The National Radical Union, Observations Mr. Macdonald Cameron *Mar* 15, 1311

SITTINGS AND ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

Friday, March 16, Questions, Mr. Osborne Morgan, Mr. Dillon; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 12, 880

The Easter Recess, Question, Mr. Mark Stewart; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 15, 1310

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE AND PUBLIC BUSINESS

Orders of the Day

Supply, Ordered, That Standing Order No. 20 appointing the Committee of Supply to be the first Order on Fridays, be read, and suspended for this day, and that the Committee of Supply be deferred until after the Order of the Day for resuming the Adjourned Debate on Public Meetings in the Metropolis (*Mr. W. H. Smith*) *Mar* 2

Ordered, That the Committee on the Consolidated Fund Bill (No. 1) and the Consideration of the National Debt (Conversion) Bill, as amended, have precedence of the Orders of the Day subsequent to the Land Law (Ireland) Acts Amendment Bill; and that so much of the Standing Orders, "Sittings of the House," as relates to the interruption of Business, and the Adjournment of the House at half-past Five, and at Six o'clock, be suspended during To-day's Sitting, until the proceedings on the Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill and the National Debt (Conversion) Bill are concluded (*Mr. W. H. Smith*) *Mar* 21

Questions, Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth, Mr. Childers; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 5, 189; Questions, Mr. John Morley, Sir John Lubbock, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 20, 1794; Observations, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith); Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, Mr. W. H. Smith *Mar* 20, 1848

Questions

Duration of Speeches, Questions, Mr. Sydney Buxton, Mr. Caine; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 5, 188

Members — Eligibility of Paid Agents of a Foreign State, Question, Mr. Tomlinson; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 20, 1792

Offices of Profit—Vacation of Seats, Question, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 16, 1435

[*cont.*

Parliament—Commons—*cont.*

Palace of Westminster

Electric Communication between the House and the Library, Question, Mr. Hobhouse; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) *Mar* 5, 171

St. Stephen's Crypt, Question, Mr. Cochrane-Baillie; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) *Mar* 8, 576

PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (RULES OF PROCEDURE)—XIII. STANDING COMMITTEES

Unfinished Bills, Question, Mr. Hobhouse; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 5, 184

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [29th February] [Fourth Night],

"That the Resolutions of the House of the 1st December 1882, relating to the Constitution and Proceedings of Standing Committees for the Consideration of Bills relating to Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure, and to Trade, Shipping, and Manufactures, be revived

"Provided always, That the Committees shall consist of not more than Sixty nor less than Forty Members, subject to the power of addition to the said Committees by the Committee of Selection, as provided by the said Resolution" (*Mr. W. H. Smith*)

Main Question again proposed; Debate resumed *Mar* 6, 384

Amendt. in line 4, after "revived," insert, "Provided, that 'Trade' shall include Agricultural and Fishing interests, and that those interests shall be entitled to due consideration in the constitution of such Standing Committee" (*Mr. Heneage*), 387; Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted;" after debate, Amendt. withdrawn

Amendt. made, by inserting, in line 4, after "revived," "and that Trade shall include Agriculture and Fishing"

Amendt. in line 5, to leave out from "revived," to end (*Viscount Lymington*), 399; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after short debate, Question put, and negatived; words struck out

Amendt. at end of Question, as amended, to add "That there be added another Standing Committee for the Consideration of all Bills relating to Scotland only" (*Sir George Campbell*), 403; Question proposed, "That those words be there added;" after debate, Question put; A. 137, N. 214; M. 77

Division List, Ayes and Noes, 465

Debate adjourned

Debate resumed [Fifth Night] *Mar* 7, 468

Amendt. at end, add "That there be another Grand Committee, similarly constituted, and subject to the same rules, the Members for Wales and Monmouthshire being Members of such Committee, for the consideration of all Bills relating to Wales which may, by order of the House in each case, be committed to it" (*Mr. Rathbone*), 474; Question proposed, "That those words be there added;" after debate, Question put; A. 113, N. 135; M. 22

Division List, Ayes and Noes, 502

[*cont.*

Parliament—Business of the House (*Rules of Procedure*)—*XIII. Standing Committees*—cont.

Anendt. at end, add "That there be another Committee, similarly constituted, and subject to the same Rules, for the consideration of all questions of a Foreign or Colonial nature, and the ratification of Treaties with Foreign Powers" (*Mr. Cremer*), 510; Question proposed, "That those words be there added," after short debate, Question put; A. 44, N. 219; M. 175 (D.L. 31)

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to

Motions for Bills and Nomination of Select Committees

Moved, "That on Tuesdays and Fridays, and, if set down by the Government, on Mondays and Thursdays, Motions for leave to bring in Bills, and for the Nomination of Select Committees, may be set down for consideration at the commencement of Public Business. If such Motions be opposed, Mr. Speaker, after permitting, if he thinks fit, a brief explanatory statement from the Member who moves and from the Member who opposes any such Motion respectively, shall put the Question thereon without further debate" (*Mr. W. H. Smith*), 514

Amendt. to leave out all after "That," insert "Motions for leave to bring in Bills, and for the nomination of Standing and Select Committees, shall be exempted from the operation of the Resolution of 24th February 1888 (Sittings of the House)" (*Mr. Buchanan*), 517; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after short debate, Amendt. withdrawn

Amendt. to leave out from "respectively," to end, add "may without further Debate put the Question thereon, or the Question 'That the Debate be now adjourned'" (*Mr. W. H. Smith*), 522; Question proposed, "That the words, &c." after short debate, Question put, and negatived

Words added; Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to

Resolutions (30th April 1869), read;

Morning Sittings at Two o'clock

That, unless the House shall otherwise order, whenever the House shall meet at Two o'clock, the House will proceed with Private Business, Petitions, Motions for unopposed Returns, and leave of absence to Members, giving Notices of Motions, Questions to Ministers, and such Orders of the Day as shall have been appointed for the Morning Sitting

Suspension of Sitting at Seven o'clock

That on such days, if the business be not sooner disposed of, the House will suspend its sitting at Seven o'clock; and at Ten minutes before Seven o'clock, unless the House shall otherwise order, Mr. Speaker adjourns the Debate on any business then under discussion, or the Chairman shall report Progress, as the case may be, and no opposed business shall then be proceeded with

[cont.

Parliament—Business of the House (*Rules of Procedure*)—cont.

Sitting resumed at Nine o'clock

That when such business has not been disposed of at Seven o'clock, unless the House shall otherwise order, Mr. Speaker (or the Chairman, in case the House shall be in Committee) do leave the Chair, and the House will resume its sitting at Nine o'clock, when the Orders of the Day not disposed of at the Morning Sitting, and any Motion which was under discussion at Ten minutes to Seven o'clock, shall be set down in the Order Book after the other Orders of the Day

When Chairman reports Progress at Nine o'clock

That, whenever the House shall be in Committee at Seven o'clock, the Chairman do report Progress when the House resumes its sitting

Resolved, That the said Resolutions be Standing Orders of the House

Adjournment at One o'clock, a.m.

Resolved, That the House shall, unless previously adjourned, sit until One o'clock, a.m., when the Speaker shall adjourn the House without Question put, unless a Bill or Proceeding exempted from the operation of Standing Order "Sittings of the House" be then under consideration. That the Business under discussion, and any Orders of the Day not disposed of at One o'clock, a.m., do stand for the next day on which the House shall sit (*Mr. W. H. Smith*)

Resolution of the 31st of May 1875, read;

Withdrawal of Strangers

That if at any sitting of the House, or in Committee, any Member shall take notice that Strangers are present, Mr. Speaker, or the Chairman (as the case may be), shall forthwith put the Question, "That Strangers be ordered to withdraw," without permitting any Debate or Amendment: Provided that the Speaker, or the Chairman, may, whenever he thinks fit, order the withdrawal of Strangers from any part of the House

Resolved, That the said Resolution be a Standing Order of this House

Resolution of the 12th of March 1886, read;

Notices of Questions by Member to be in Writing.

That Notices of Questions be given by Members in writing to the Clerk at the Table, without reading them vivâ voce in the House, unless the consent of the Speaker to any particular Question has been previously obtained

Resolved, That the said Resolution be a Standing Order of this House

Standing Order XIVA (Closure of Debate) read, and amended by leaving out the first Proviso, lines 17 to 21 inclusive

Standing Order XXI. (Notices on going into Committee of Supply) read, 525

Moved, as an Amendment to Standing Order XXI. (Notices on going into Committee of Supply), to leave out in line 1, "the first," insert "an" (*Mr. W. H. Smith*), 526; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;"

[cont.

Parliament—Business of the House (*Rules of Procedure*)—*XXI. Notices on going into Committee of Supply*—cont.

after short debate, Question put, and negatived; Word inserted

Standing Order, as amended, agreed to

Standing Order XXII. (Select Committees) read, and amended by leaving out, in lines 1 and 2, "on Wednesdays and other Morning Sittings of the House"

Amendt. proposed to Standing Order XXII. leave out "except while the House is at prayers" (*Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth*); Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after short debate, Amendt. withdrawn

Standing Order XXXVI. (Orders of the Day and Notices of Motion) read, and amended by leaving out, in line 6, "Orders," inserting "Business, whether Orders or Motions"

Standing Order XXXVIII. (Orders of the Day and Notices of Motion) read, and amended by inserting, in line 3, after "Orders," "or Motions"

Resolved, That the Resolutions of this House of the 24th, 28th, and 29th days of February, and of the 7th day of March, relative to the Business of the House (Rules of Procedure), with the exception of Resolution No. XII., be Standing Orders of this House

Moved, "That Standing Orders Nos. III., IV., V. (Wednesday Sittings), VI., VII., VIII. (Morning Sittings), XI. (Debates on Motions for Adjournment), XIII. (Irrelevance or Repetition), XIV. (Putting the Question), XXXIX. (Dropped Orders), XLI. (The Half-past 12 o'clock Rule), and XLIV. (Divisions), be repealed" (*Mr. W. H. Smith*), 530

Amendt. to leave out "XLI. (The Half-past 12 o'clock Rule" (*Mr. Tomlinson*), 530; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" Amendt. withdrawn; Original Question put, and agreed to

Resolved, That the Standing Orders of this House relative to Public Business, as amended, be printed (*Mr. W. H. Smith*), 531; Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. W. H. Smith*); Question put, and agreed to

Ordered, That the further consideration of the New Rules of Procedure be adjourned till Monday 19th March

Parliament—Debates and Proceedings in Parliament

Ordered, That a Committee of Six Members of this House be appointed to join with a Committee of the House of Lords to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords, to acquaint their Lordships, That this House hath appointed a Committee of Six Members to join with a Committee of the Lords to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament *Mar* 7; List of the Committee, 533

[*cont.*

Parliament—Debates and Proceedings in Parliament—cont.

Ordered, That so much of the Lords Message as proposes the time and place of meeting of the Joint Committee on Debates and Proceedings in Parliament be now considered

Lords Message considered accordingly.

Ordered, That the Select Committee appointed to join with the Committee of the Lords, to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament, do meet in Room No. 1, Upper Corroidor, on Thursday next, at Twelve of the clock

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords, to acquaint their Lordships that this House hath directed the Select Committee appointed by them to inquire and report as to the cost and method of the publication of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament, do meet in Room No. 1, Upper Corridor, on Thursday next, at Twelve of the clock.

Ordered, That the Select Committee have power to agree in the appointment of a Chairman *Mar* 15

Ordered, That the Committee on Debates and Proceedings in Parliament have power to send for persons, papers, and records

Ordered, That Three be the quorum (*Mr. Jackson*) *Mar* 16

Parliament—House of Lords

Amendt. on Committee of Supply *Mar* 9, To leave out from "That," add "in the opinion of this House, it is contrary to the true principles of Representative Government, and injurious to their efficiency, that any person should be a Member of one House of the Legislature by right of birth, and it is therefore desirable to put an end to any such existing rights" (*Mr Labouchere*) *v.*, 763; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after debate, Question put; A. 223, N. 162; M. 61

Division List, Ayes and Noes, 813

Parliament—House of Commons (*Admission of Strangers*)

Select Committee appointed, "to inquire into the Rules and Regulations under which Strangers are admitted to this House and its precincts, and to report whether any alterations in the same are expedient" (*Viscount Ebrington*) *Mar* 15

Parliament—Private Bill Legislation

A Joint Committee, Question, Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 5, 183

Moved, "That a Committee of Six Members of this House be appointed to join with a Committee of the House of Lords to examine into the present system of Private Bill Legislation, and to report how far, and in what manner, without prejudice to public interests, that system may be modified, with a view to the interests of suitors, the economy of the time of Parliament, and the reduction of costs and charges" (*Mr. W. H. Smith*) *Mar* 12, 1023; Question put, and agreed to

[*cont.*

PARLIAMENT—HOUSE OF LORDS
Sat First
Mar 19—The Duke of Rutland, after the death of his brother

PARLIAMENT—HOUSE OF COMMONS
New Writs Issued
Mar 5 — *For* the Chichester Division of Sussex, *v.* The honble. Charles Henry Gordon Lennox, Earl of March, Chiltern Hundreds
Mar 9 — *For* Methyr Tydvil, *v.* Charles Herbert James, esquire, Manor of Northstead
Mar 12—*For* Glamorgan County (Western or Gower Division), *v.* Frank Ash Yeo, esquire, deceased
Mar 15—*For* Leicestershire (Melton Division), *v.* The Right. honble. John James Robert Manners, G.C.B., commonly called Lord John Manners, now Duke of Rutland, called up to the House of Peers

New Members Sworn
Mar 15—Lord Walter Charles Gordon Lennox, *County of Sussex* (*South Western or Chichester Division*)
Mar 20—David Alfred Thomas, esquire, *Methyr Tydvil Borough*

Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland [Salary, &c.]
c. Considered in Committee *Mar* 9, 738
Moved, " That it is expedient to authorize the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of a Salary to the Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland " (*Mr. W. H. Smith*); after debate, " Moved, " That the Question be now put " (*Mr. W. H. Smith*); Question put; A. 190, N. 130; M. 60 (D. L. 34); Question put, " That it is expedient, &c.; " A. 182, N. 132; M. 50 (D. L. 35)
Question, Mr. John Morley; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 19, 1639
Considered in Committee *Mar* 19, 1709
Moved, " That it is expedient to make regulations for the Office of Under Secretary and of Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland " (*Mr. Arthur Balfour*); after debate, Question put; A. 159, N. 103; M. 56 (D. L. 44)
Moved, " That the Chairman do report these Resolutions to the House ;" after short debate, Moved, " That the Question be now put " (*Mr. W. H. Smith*); Question put; A. 146, N. 86; M. 60 (D. L. 45); Question put, " That the Chairman do report these Resolutions to the House ;" A. 144, N. 86; M. 58 (D. L. 46)
(1.) Resolved, That it is expedient to authorize the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of a Salary to the Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland

[*cont.*

Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland [*Salary, &c.*]—cont.
(2.) Resolved, That it is expedient to make regulations for the Office of Under Secretary and of Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland

Parliamentary Voters Bill
(*Mr. Cremer, Mr. William Crawford, Mr. Abraham* (*Glamorgan*), *Mr. Burt, Mr. Pickard, Mr. James Rowlands*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Mar* 14 [Bill 171]

PARNELL, Mr. C. S., *Cork*
Army Estimates—Land Forces, 679
Land Law (Ireland) Acts Amendment, 2R. 1873, 1906, 1932
Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland [Salary, &c.], Comm. 1748

PAULTON, Mr. J. M., *Durham, Bishop Auckland*
Ireland—Riots, &c.—Criminal Law and Procedure Act—Boycotting—Convictions at Ennis, 845, 846
Disturbances at Miltown Malbay, 844

Pauper Lunatics' Asylums (Ireland) (Officers' Superannuation) Bill
(*Mr. Johnston, Mr. Chance*)
c. Committee deferred *Mar* 13, 1181 [Bill 135]

PEASE, Sir J. W., *Durham, Barnard Castle*
Oaths, 2R. 1212

PEASE, Mr. A. E., *York*
Ireland—Law Officers of the Crown—The Attorney General for Ireland, 580

PEEL, Right Hon. A. W. (*see* SPEAKER, The)

PELLY, Sir L., *Hackney, N.*
Protection of the Empire, 285

Pharmacy Acts Amendment Bill [H.L.]
(*The Earl of Milltown*)
l. Committee *Mar* 6, 328 (No. 13)
Report * *Mar* 12 (No. 34)
Read 3ª * *Mar* 16

PICKERSGILL, Mr. E. H., *Bethnal Green, S.W.*
Customs House—Statistical Department—Promotion of Writers, 1076
Local Government (England and Wales), Motion for Leave, 1679
London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance, 584
Memorandum of Sir Charles Warren (Mr. Baggallay), Res. 1848, 1851, 1859, 1867

[*cont.*

PICKERSGILL, Mr. E. H.—*cont.*
  Metropolitan Police Constables — Assaults, 1286
  Occupiers Disqualification Removal, 2R. 684
  Public Meetings in the Metropolis, Res. 134
  "Sweating System"—The Lords Committee, 1299
  Trafalgar Square, Disturbances in—The Military, 1432, 1433
    The Police (Injuries), 1433

PICTON, Mr. J. A., *Leicester*
  Church Revenues—The Return, 872, 873
  Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts—Case of Cow Disease in Wiltshire, 861
  Ireland—Prisons—Mrs. Ryan, a Prisoner in Limerick Gaol, 167
  Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland [Salary, &c.], Comm. 756
  Supreme Court of Judicature Act, 1875—Visitors of Chancery Lunatics, 1779
  Vaccination—The Rev. T. Maine, Ashton-under-Lyne, 860

Pilotage
  Select Committee appointed, "to consider the position of the Pilotage system of the United Kingdom, with power to send for persons, papers, and records" (*Sir John Puleston*) *Mar* 2

PLOWDEN, Sir W. C., *Wolverhampton, W.*
  Civil Service Writers, 1285

PLUNKET, Right Hon. D. R. (First Commissioner of Works), *Dublin University*) •
  Admiralty and War Office (New) Buildings, 1626
  Parliament—Palace of Westminster—Electric Communication between the House and Library, 171
    St. Stephen's Crypt, 576
  Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens—Richmond Park—The Clarence Lanes, Roehampton, 1636

Pluralities Acts Amendment Act, 1885, Amendment Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Bishop of Bangor*)
  Read 2a* *Mar* 9 (No. 26)
  Committee*; Report *Mar* 12
  Read 3a* *Mar* 13

POMFRET, Mr. W. P., *Kent, Ashford*
  Post Office—Re-direction of Letters and Post Cards, 1283

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)
  Auditors under the Local Government Board, Question, Mr. W. H. James; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Mar* 13, 1064
  Election of Guardians—Coventry, Questions, Mr. Ballantine; Answers, The Secretary to the Local Government Board (Mr. Long) *Mar* 2, 17;—*Nottingham—Mr. Metcalf*, Question, Mr. H. S. Wright; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Mar* 5, 163;—*Question of Voting Papers*, Question, Mr. J. Rowlands; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Mar* 12, 863
  Margarine in Fulham Workhouse Infirmary, Question, Mr. Bond; Answer, The Secretary to the Local Government Board (Mr. Long) *Mar* 19, 1632
  Parochial Medical Officers, Question, Sir Walter Foster; Answer, The Secretary to the Local Government Board (Mr. Long) *Mar* 2, 16

Poor Law Relief
  Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty praying Her Majesty to issue a Royal Commission to inquire into the present systems of poor law relief, especially with reference to the apparent inadequacy of those systems to cope effectually with the distress recurring from time to time amongst large numbers of unemployed persons in the Metropolis and other populous places; or that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the subject" (*V. Gordon, E. Aberdeen*) *Mar* 8, 546; after debate, Motion withdrawn
  Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire as to the various powers now in possession of the Poor Law guardians, and their adequacy to cope with distress that may from time to time exist in the Metropolis and other populous places; and also as to the expediency of concerted action between the Poor Law authorities and voluntary agencies for the relief of distress" (*V. Gordon, E. Aberdeen*) *Mar* 16; Motion agreed to

POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)
(*Questions*)
  British and Foreign Postage Rates from Shanghai, Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 9, 704
  Contracts for Stamps and Stamped Paper, Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 19, 1630
  Deduction of Pay—Glasgow and Manchester, Questions, Mr. Caldwell; Answers, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 8, 589; *Mar* 13, 1080
  Greenwich Time Signals, Question, Mr. Boord; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 12, 846
  Halfpenny Postage Company, Questions, Mr. Mowbray, Mr. Henniker Heaton, Mr. Byron Reed; Answers, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 2, 23
  Mail Cart from Higham Ferrers to Northampton, Questions, Mr. Channing; Answers, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 5, 174
  Officials at Political Meetings, Question, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 16,

[*cont.*

[*cont.*

Post Office (*England and Wales*)—cont.
1430; Question, Mr. D. Sullivan; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 20, 1788
Pensions of London Postmen, Question, Mr. Seager Hunt; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 19, 1633
Purchase of the Telephone Companies, Question, Sir Henry Tyler; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 6, 382
Re-direction of Letters and Post Cards, Question, Mr. Pomfret; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 15, 1283
Rural Letter Carriers, Question, Mr. P. M'Donald; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 6, 380
Small Purchases of Consols, Question, Mr. Bartley; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 6, 364
Supply of Clothing to First-Class Postmen, Questions, Mr. Caldwell; Answers, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 8, 589; *Mar* 13, 1081
Uniform Postage Stamp for Great Britain and Her Colonies, Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 12, 856

Mail Services
Delay in the French Mail Service, Questions, Mr. Henniker Heaton, Mr. J. W. Lowther; Answers, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 15, 1310
Deliveries in the North of Ireland, Question, Mr. Blane; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 15, 1292
Postal Service to Cyprus, Question, Mr. Stanley Leighton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 8, 569

Parcel Post
Pay of Parcel Postmen, Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 15, 1273
Parcel Post to New Zealand, Question, Mr. Tomlinson; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 20, 1777

Powell, Mr. F. S., *Wigan*
Local Government (England and Wales), Motion for Leave, 1691
National Debt (Conversion)—Trustees, 1633
National Debt (Conversion), Consid. Amendt. 1957, 1958
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure), Res. XIII. Standing Committees, 399
Scotland—Technical Schools Act—Memorandum of the Education Department, 701
Technical Education—Report of Commission on Elementary Education, 1434

Powis, Earl of
Metropolis (Street Improvements)—Hyde Park Corner, 834

Price, Captain G. E., *Devonport*
Admiralty—Widows of Retired Navigating Officers, 1293

Prime Minister (*see* Salisbury, Marquess of)

Provand, Mr. A. D., *Glasgow, Blackfriars, &c.*
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure), Res. XIII. Standing Committees, 435

Public Health (Prevention of Infectious Diseases, &c.) Bill
(*Mr. Hastings, Dr. Farquharson, Mr. Francis Powell, Mr. Wharton, Mr. Hardcastle*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Mar* 20 [Bill 181]

Public Meetings in the Metropolis
Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Motion [1st March],
"That, having regard to the importance of preserving and protecting the right of open air public meetings for Her Majesty's subjects in the Metropolis, and with a view to prevent ill-will and disorder, it is desirable that an inquiry should be instituted by a Committee of this House into the conditions subject to which such meetings may be held, and the limits of the right of interference therewith by the Executive Government" (*Sir Charles Russell*); Question again proposed; Debate resumed *Mar* 2, 35; after long debate, Moved, "That the Question be now put" (*Mr. W. H. Smith*); Question put accordingly, and agreed to; Question put, "That those words be there added;" A. 207, N. 322; M. 115 (D.L. 26)
Moved, "That the Main Question be now put" (*Mr. W. H. Smith*); Main Question put accordingly; A. 224, N. 316; M. 92 (D. L. 27)

Public Offices
Admiralty and War Office (New) Buildings, Questions, Sir Matthew White Ridley, Mr. Dillwyn; Answers, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) *Mar* 19, 1626
Record Office—Removal of Public Records from Westminster, Question, Mr. Howell; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 5, 185

Public Trustee Bill
Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 20, 1793

Public Worship Facilities Bill
(*Mr. Salt, Baron Dimsdale, Mr. Morrison, Mr. Whitmore*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Mar* 20 [Bill 183]

Puleston, Sir J. H., *Devonport*
Administrative System of the Admiralty, Res. 1340

Quarter Sessions Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Chancellor*)
l. Presented ; read 1^a * *Mar* 12 (No. 37)

RAIKES, Right Hon. H. C. (Postmaster General), *Cambridge University*
Parliament—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure), Res. XIII. Standing Committees, 456, 457, 461, 480, 482, 485
Post Office—Questions
British and Foreign Rates from Shanghai, 704
Contracts for Stamps and Stamped Paper, 1630
Deduction of Pay—Glasgow and Manchester, 590, 1081
Delay in the French Mail Service, 1310
Greenwich Time Signals, 847
Halfpenny Postage Company, 23
Mail Cart from Higham Ferrers to Northampton, 175
Officials at Political Meetings, 1788
Parcel Post to New Zealand, 1777
Parcel Postmen, Pay of, 1273
Pensions of London Postmen, 1633
Postal Service to Cyprus, 569
Purchase of the Telephone Companies, 382
Re-direction of Letters and Post Cards, 1284
Rural Letter Carriers, 380
Small Purchases of Consols, 365
Supply of Clothing to First-Class Postmen, 589
Uniform Postage Stamps for Great Britain and her Colonies, 856
Post Office (Ireland)—Questions
Deliveries in the North of Ireland, 1292
Delivery of Mails at Macroom, 27
Dublin—Second-Class Sorters, 1067
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(3.) £3,614,903, on account; Moved, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution;" after short debate, Debate adjourned
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(*Mr. Arthur Balfour, Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland, Colonel King-Harman*)

c. *Council of Law Reporting*, Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, The Solicitor General for Ireland (Mr. Madden) *Mar* 9, 698
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Thomas, Mr. A., *Glamorgan, E.*
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(*Mr. Arthur Balfour, Colonel King-Harman, Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Mar* 5 [Bill 157]
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Tithe Rentcharge—Legislation
Question, Mr. H. Gardner; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 20, 1793

Toleration Act, The—Nonconformists in Yorkshire
Questions, Mr. Handel Cossham; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 20, 1782

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Questions, Mr. James Stuart, Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Mr. Barran; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 20, 1788

TORRINGTON, Viscount
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Trade and Commerce—Convention with China—Trade with Thibet
Question, Sir John Simon; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Mar* 5, 166

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(*Mr. Hunter, Mr. Macdonald Cameron, Mr. Barclay, Mr. Esslemont*)
c. 2R., after short debate, Debate adjourned *Mar* 8, 683 [Bill 155]

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Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Mar* 13, 1068

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Truro Cathedral Fabric and Services Bill [H.L.] (*The Lord Steward*)
l. Select Comm. L. Ker added; L. Magheramorne discharged *Mar* 2

Trust Companies Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Hobhouse*)
l. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª" *Mar* 8, 538
After short debate, Amendt. to leave out ("now,") add ("this day six months") (*The Lord Chancellor*); on Question, whether ("now") &c.; Cont. 31, Not-Cont. 41; M. 10
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Resolved in the negative; Bill to be read 2ª on this day six months

Trustee Savings Banks Act, 1887*—Cardiff Trustee Savings Bank—Report of the Commissioners*
Question, Mr. Howell; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *Mar* 13, 1079

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Universities (Scotland) Bill
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Universities (Scotland) Bill [H.L.]
(*The Marquess of Lothian*)
l. Presented; read 1ª* *Mar* 19 (No. 47)

Vaccination
The Rev. T. Mayne, Ashton-under-Lyne, Question, Mr. Picton ; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 12, 860
Prosecution of Charles Hayward, Ashford, Kent, Question, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Mar* 15, 1290

Vexatious Indictments (Amendment) Bill (*Mr. Addison, Mr. Whitley, Mr. Dugdale, Mr. Fulton*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Mar* 13 [Bill 170]

VINCENT, Mr. C. E. H., *Sheffield, Central*
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VIVIAN, Sir H. Hussey, *Swansea, District*
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Vivisection
Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for Correspondence between the Home Office and the Society for the Protection of Animals from Vivisection in reference to two recent instances of infringements of the law" (*The Viscount Sidmouth*) *Mar* 9, 692 ; after short debate, Motion agreed to

WALES
The Tithe Agitation—Anglesey—Distraints at Heneglwys, Questions, Mr. J. Bryn Roberts ; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 19, 1626 ; *Mar* 20, 1791
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WAR DEPARTMENT—Under Secretary of State (*see* HARRIS, Lord)

WAR DEPARTMENT—Financial Secretary (*see* BRODRICK, Hon. W. St. J. F.)

WARING, Colonel T., *Down, N.*
Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland [Salary, &c.], Comm. 1734, 1736

War Office and Admiralty, Administration of the—The Royal Commission
Question, Lord Charles Beresford ; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 15, 1308

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Stamp Duties—Amount Received for Apprentice Fees, Question, Mr. Bristowe ; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) *Mar* 19, 1622
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THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT
Question, Sir Julian Goldsmid ; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 12, 882

WAYS AND MEANS
Considered in Committee *Mar* 16, 1440
(1.) Moved, "That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the years ending on the 31st day of March 1887 and 1888, the sum of £114,900 7*s.* 4*d.* be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom ;" Vote agreed to
(2) Moved, "That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the year ending on the 31st day of March 1889, the sum of £11,704,603 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom ;" after short debate, Moved, "That a reduced sum of £11,703,603

[*cont.*

Ways and Means—*cont.*
be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom" (*Mr. T. M. Healy*); after further short debate, Question put, and negatived; Original Question put, and agreed to
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Westminster Abbey Bill
(*Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Jackson*)
c. Motion for Leave (*Mr. W. H. Smith*) *Mar* 12, 1024; Question put, and agreed to; Bill ordered; read 1°* [Bill 165]

West Surrey Waterworks Company's Bill
Question, Mr. Dixon-Hartland; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Mar* 15, 1292

Whitbread, Mr. S., *Bedford*
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c. Ordered; read 1°* *Mar* 13 [Bill 168]

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